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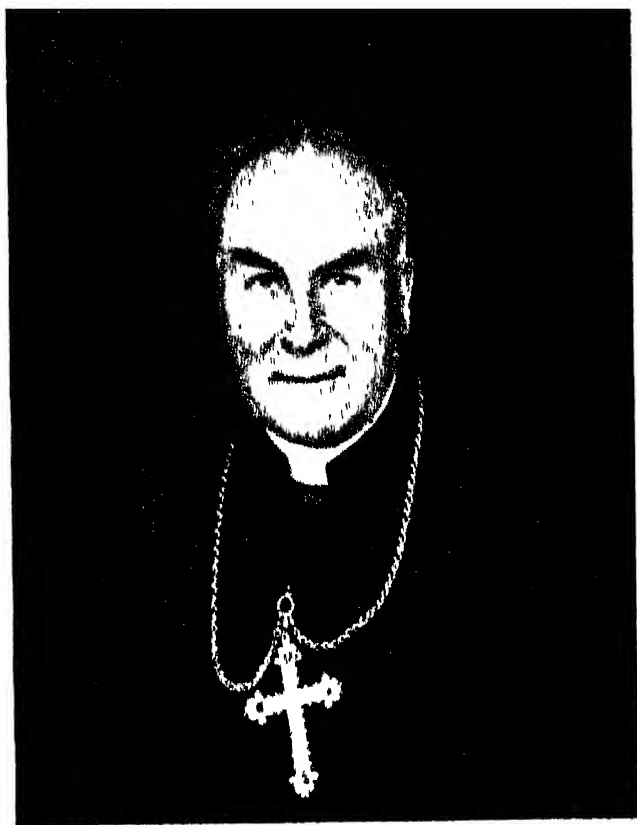


JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY AND  
GERMANY









*Ich grüße meine Zuhörer  
und Leser mit dem biblischen  
Gruß : Der Friede sei mit Euch !*

*Kardinal Faulhaber*

# JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY AND GERMANY

By

HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL FAULHABER  
*Archbishop of Munich*

Translated by

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## INTRODUCTION

THE sermons preached by Cardinal Michael von Faulhaber during December, 1933, and issued here in an English version are, of course, no mere additions to the literature of pulpit oratory. They form a document of quite unusual value concerning one of the fiercest and most crucial of the many struggles through which a civilization only a little while ago termed "modern" is now everywhere passing. This I wish to make clear in a brief foreword, the invitation to write which is both an honor and a challenge.

When Cardinal Faulhaber addressed the faithful congregated in Munich cathedral on the Sundays of Advent, the followers of Adolf Hitler had been in full control of Germany for some eight months. There was considerable difference of opinion regarding this condition among those who did not profess the National-Socialist doctrine, some looking upon the Nazi triumph as inevitable and therefore beyond criticism, others viewing it as at least an antidote to Communism and destined to outgrow the excesses which had marked its access to power, and still others facing it with real hostility or dread. All these views were current among German Catho-

lics, whose attitude was a matter of importance both because they had been solidly organized in a political party of more than sixty years' standing and because they alone—through the hierarchy of their Church—had several times condemned some tenets of the Nazi creed as unethical and incompatible with a Christian view of life.

By December the meaning of events had grown far clearer. Despite expressions of neutrality which came from Hitler himself, leaders of the party had launched an attack against the independence of the churches. Jewry had, to be sure, been under fire from the beginning; and it was largely because of what anti-Semitism involved that the Nazis proceeded to engage in debate with Lutheranism and Catholicism. The chief issue in the struggle which went on for months (and which still continues) between the National-Socialist "German Christians" and orthodox Lutherans or Evangelicals was whether a baptized Jew could possess equal rights with others inside the church. As the argument progressed, the more extreme among the "German Christians" attacked the validity of the Old Testament and even asserted that Jesus Christ was not a Jew but an Aryan. Indeed, toward the close of 1933 the threat to establish a "national church" free of Semitic taint, definitively Teutonic and endowed with a special grant of favor from the Hitler regime had become a grave and serious danger.

At this moment the Cardinal of Munich resolved

to deliver the sermons which are here reissued. The reader must bear in mind always that they grew out of the discussion concerning the status of the Jew and his tradition, and that they had no bearing on other questions which were tending to create an antithesis between Hitlerism and Catholicism. During the months preceding, the Vatican had signed a Concordat with the Nazi government. The ink was hardly dry when trouble arose concerning the inviolability of the pulpit, the rights of Catholic youth and worker organizations, the sterilization of the so-called "unfit" and other things. Quite as important, no doubt, was the problem of nationalism itself. Several Papal Encyclicals had dedicated Catholics to the cause of peace and international cooperation. German bishops and leaders had staunchly supported this movement, which had no more unflinching advocate than the Cardinal of Munich. Nevertheless, in view of the fact that negotiations over questions affecting German Catholics were then being conducted by the Vatican, Cardinal Faulhaber would not have ventured to make them topics of public addresses. He was acting as a religious teacher, conscious of the obligation to withstand trends of thought inimical to religion and the moral law.

The general subject of these addresses is the Old Testament, which is defended as an integral part of Christian tradition. Jehovah as he has been worshiped by the Jews is not a Deity alien to the Fa-

ther of whom Christ spoke. While the Gospels reveal more of God than Moses and the Prophets were able to discern, He remains one and the same on Mount Sinai and Mount Calvary. Therefore the spiritual and ethical truth enshrined in the Sacred Books of the Hebrews must be accepted as divine of origin by all who are Christians in the Catholic sense. Even if Jews were really in every way reprehensible, the fact would remain that the word conserved by them during thousands of years cannot be abrogated by as much as a single jot or tittle. On the other hand, the endeavor to blend Christianity with Germanic myth—to wed the Trinity and Wotan, as it were—is foredoomed to failure. Between Christ and the demigods of saga and folk-lore there is only one possible relation: that between victor and vanquished.

So runs the argument. Cardinal Faulhaber was peculiarly well fitted to discuss this highly actual topic. He had been a professor of Old Testament history, studying it with the thoroughness so characteristic of German scholars and yet never losing himself in merely academic minutiae. He was also the churchman of his country to whom all, friend and foe alike, would listen with attention. His fearlessness and eminence of character had left their mark on the tangled decade which followed the War. Millions had learned to consider his the voice through which Catholic conviction would be expressed in times of doubt, chaos and peril.

These sermons therefore echoed throughout the land with impressive finality, strengthening many who had begun to despair in the spirit and challenging others whose aims were to uproot the venerable ideology of the Christian faith. For weeks after they were printed in brochure form, these sermons enjoyed the vogue of a best-selling book in virtually all parts of Europe. Today that brochure can no longer be purchased in Germany. Indeed, an attack was made upon the life of the Cardinal soon after the year 1934 had dawned, the would-be assassins being motivated chiefly by their resentment of the reasoning which the American reader is now able to follow through the medium of an accurate translation.

Catholic, Protestant and Jew can, I believe, learn from this book—and of course from the experience which underlies it—how much of central religious importance they share in common. To undermine the Jewish foundations of the Christian faith in order to prepare the way for a cult of racial nationalism is to leave that faith dangling in mid-air, without either roots or an excuse for any longer existing. If at some future time we in the United States should be menaced by a drift to hatreds paralleling those now unleashed in Nazi Germany, the stand taken by a Catholic authority could be no different from that so lucidly, bravely and effectively outlined in this book.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER.





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# JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY AND GERMANY

## THE RELIGIOUS VALUES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THEIR FUL- FILMENT IN CHRISTIANITY

‘ Do not think that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy but to fulfil. For amen I say to you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall not pass of the law, till all be fulfilled ’ (Matt. v, 17 *seq.*).

**A**LREADY in the year 1899, on the occasion of an anti-Semitic demonstration at Hamburg, and simultaneously in Chamberlain's book, *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, a demand was raised for the total separation of Judaism from Christianity, and for the complete elimination from Christianity of all Jewish elements. Nearly two decades later these ideas were once more propagated in such

books as *The Sin Against Blood*, *The Great Fraud* and *The False God*. Judaism and Christianity, it was maintained, were incompatible ; the Jewish Bible must be replaced by a German Bible ; Martin Luther had done only half his work, for in his Bible he had included the Scriptures of the Old Testament. To-day these single voices have swelled together into a chorus : Away with the Old Testament ! A Christianity which still clings to the Old Testament is a Jewish religion, irreconcilable with the spirit of the German people. Children at school must no longer be bothered with Bible stories of Joseph the Egyptian or the ancient Moses. . . . Given the present general attitude of mind, this outcry is well calculated to shake the foundations of the faith in the souls of the German people.

Even the Person of Christ is not spared by this religious revolution. Some have indeed tried to save Him with a forged birth-certificate, and have said that He was not a Jew at all but an Aryan, because there were Aryans among the inhabitants of Galilee. But so long as historical sources count for more than surmise, there can be no doubt about the fact. The first chapter of the first gospel gives us the genealogy of Jesus, with the title : ‘ The book

of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham.' Similarly, the Epistle to the Romans attests the origin of Jesus from the seed of David (i, 4). Undoubtedly the Galileans, a borderland people, were of mixed origin. But Christ was not born in Galilee; He was born in Bethlehem, the city of David, in the land of the tribe of Juda, and officially He was entered in the register as a descendant of David. And so others now take up the cry: Then we must renounce Him, if He was a Jew—and the scene of the Gospel is re-enacted: 'They thrust Him out of the city and brought Him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong' (Luke iv, 29). 'Again they took up stones to stone Him' (John x, 31).

When such voices are raised, when such movements are afoot, the bishop cannot remain silent. When racial research, in itself not a religious matter, makes war upon religion and attacks the foundations of Christianity; when antagonism to the Jews of the present day is extended to the sacred books of the Old Testament and Christianity is condemned because it has relations of origin with pre-Christian Judaism; when stones are cast at the Person

of our Lord and Saviour, and this in the very year in which we are celebrating the centenary of His work of Redemption, then the bishop cannot remain silent. And therefore I preach these Advent sermons on the Old Testament and its fulfilment in Christianity.

On this subject I may claim to speak as a specialist, having spent eleven years of my life lecturing on these questions in the University of Würzburg, and having held the chair of Old Testament Scripture in the University of Strasburg.

#### I. A THREEFOLD DISTINCTION

So that I may be perfectly clear and preclude any possible misunderstanding, let me begin by making three distinctions. We must first distinguish between the people of Israel before and after the death of Christ. Before the death of Christ during the period between the calling of Abraham and the fullness of time, the people of Israel were the vehicle of Divine Revelation. The Spirit of God raised up and enlightened men who by the law, the Mosaic Torah, regulated their religious and civil life, by the Psalms provided them with a prayer-book for family devotion and a hymn-book for

the public liturgy, by the Sapiential books taught them how to conduct their lives, and as prophets awakened the conscience of the nation with the living word. It is only with this Israel of the early biblical period that I shall deal in my Advent sermons.

After the death of Christ Israel was dismissed from the service of Revelation. She had not known the time of her visitation. She had repudiated and rejected the Lord's Anointed, had driven Him out of the city and nailed Him to the Cross. Then the veil of the Temple was rent, and with it the covenant between the Lord and His people. The daughters of Sion received the bill of divorce, and from that time forth Assuerus wanders, for ever restless, over the face of the earth. Even after the death of Christ the Jews are still a 'mystery,' as St. Paul says (Rom. xi, 25) ; and one day, at the end of time, for them too the hour of grace will strike (Rom. xi, 26). But—I repeat—in these Advent sermons I am speaking only of pre-Christian Judaism.

In the second place we must distinguish between the Scriptures of the Old Testament on the one hand and the Talmudic writings of post-Christian Judaism on the other, whether these be glosses and commentaries on the



biblical text or separate religious works ; I mean especially the Talmud, the Mishna, and the mediæval code of laws, Schulchan Arukh. The Talmudic writings are the work of man ; they were not prompted by the Spirit of God. It is only the sacred writings of pre-Christian Judaism, not the Talmud, that the Church of the New Testament has accepted as her inheritance.<sup>1</sup>

Thirdly, we must distinguish in the Old Testament Bible itself between what had only transitory value and what had permanent value. The long genealogies had value in ancient times, but their value was not permanent ; similarly the numerous regulations for the ancient sacrifices and ceremonial cleansings. For the purpose of our subject we are concerned only with those religious, ethical, and social values of the Old Testament which remain as values also for Christianity.

<sup>1</sup> The word Testament (will) was invented by Christ Himself (Mark xiv, 34), and its meaning is more fully developed by St. Paul in his epistles. Properly the name belongs only to the New Testament, which ' is of force ' only after the death of the testator (Heb. ix, 16-17) ; but subsequently it was extended also to the Old Testament.

II. THE PERMANENT RELIGIOUS VALUES OF THE  
OLD TESTAMENT

It is a fact in the history of civilization, that among no people of the pre-Christian era do we find so great a number of intellectually prominent men who, by their words and by their whole personality, have devoted themselves to the religious guidance of their nation, as among the people of the early Bible. Among no other people do we find a series of writings in which the fundamental truths of the religious life are presented with such clarity, such distinctness and such harmony as in the Mosaic Pentateuch with the simple beauty of its biblical stories ; in the books of Kings, classical models in the art of historical writing which, by the way, our Germanists would do well to notice ; in the books of the Chronicles with their liturgical prescriptions ; in the book of Job with its treatment of the problem of suffering ; in the Sapiential books with their maxims of conduct ; in the books of the four major and the twelve minor prophets with their national sermons ; in the books of the Machabees, where the ancient heroism of the faith is once more resplendent. In these

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days, when the history and the literature of other pre-Christian peoples are being investigated, the science of religions is able to make the comparison ; and to the people of Israel it will award this certificate : You have excelled them all by the sublimity of your religion ; among all the nations of antiquity you have exhibited the noblest religious values.

But pre-Christian Judaism did not produce these values of itself. ' Prophecy came not by the will of man at any time ; but the holy men of God spoke inspired by the Holy Ghost ' (2 Pet. i, 21). The Spirit of the Lord enlightened them ; their tongues, as the Psalmist says, were the pencils of God, and therefore their speech was the word of God and their books, as the Fathers of Trent declared, have ' God as their author.' The French biblical critic (Rénan) would have it that these books were the natural product of the Semitic mind. But in that case why did the other Semitic races produce nothing equal or even similar ? The Babylonians were masters in the arts of secular civilization, especially in the construction of canals and fortifications ; but they have left no heritage to the history of religions. The Arabs, also a Semitic people, near neighbours of the Israelites and closely related to them by

blood, were, from the religious point of view, as sterile as the sand of their own deserts. Why God should have chosen just this particular people of Israel, in this little corner of the earth called Palestine, to be the vehicle of His Revelation, remains a mystery of the dispensation of His grace. But we give thanks to the Father of lights for having preserved their Holy Scriptures for us in texts and versions, as 'the book of life' (Eccli. xxiv, 32).

In particular, human civilization and the ✓ Christian religion are indebted to the Old Testament for a pure and elevated conception of the Godhead, the most biblical thing in the Bible ; for the revelation of Jahwe, Him who is, the God of Sabaoth, the Lord of armies, the only God, who suffers no strange gods before Him ; the transcendent, personal God who by His revelation stooped down from His infinite heights and through His envoys spoke to men, gave them His law and required that His law should be obeyed ; the God who, to use the poetical but unphilosophical language of the Psalmist, has put on praise and beauty, is clothed with light as with a garment, stretches out the heaven like a pavilion, makes the spirits His angels and the burning fire His minister (Ps. ciii, 1-4). The conception of God is the

noblest conception that the mind of man can conceive.

The peoples in the neighbourhood of Chanaan did not even approach to the high level of the Jewish conception of God : neither the Assyrians and Babylonians with their hymns to the gods, pious enough though they were ; nor the Egyptians with their animal idols. Even the Greeks, that highly intellectual people, had an Olympus of gods, and notwithstanding the Neoplatonic expurgations of their theodicy they never achieved so sublime a conception of the Godhead.

I am aware of the objections which are made against the God of the Old Testament : God, it is said, commanded Abraham to offer human sacrifice. God did not require a human sacrifice. He wanted to try the Patriarch, to see whether he could practise faith and obedience, even when the human understanding is at a loss, even when the heart of a father must break. In other incidents Jahwe appears as angry and passionate. The reason is that harsh times call for harsh words. Elsewhere, too, the imagery has an Oriental colouring and there is talk of envy and revenge ; or sublime ideas are expressed in elementary guise, so as to be understood by those who were but

children in the preparatory school of Divine Revelation.

In the Gospel of the New Testament the ancient conception of God is perfected and fulfilled. Christ came into the world that we might know the Father 'the only true God, and Jesus Christ' whom He had sent (John xvii, 3). The men of the Old Covenant spoke as 'children'; the New Testament has become a man and 'has put away the things of a child' (1 Cor. xiii, 11). The same God who spoke from the bush on Mount Horeb had now appeared visibly in the Person of Emmanuel, God with us. Christ called the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob 'the God of the living' (Matt. xxii, 32), and in the first petition of the Our Father marvellously summed up all the ancient hymns to God. The God of the New Testament is not a different God from the God of the Old. But the idea of God is perfected and fulfilled in the Gospel in three ways: Here the Divine perfections are more clearly revealed. Here the monotheism of the Old Testament is developed into the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity. This mystery had already been foreshadowed in the triple *Sanctus* of the Old Testament; but here it is openly revealed: 'In the name of the

Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.' Finally, here in the Gospel man is shown the way to God : ' No man,' says Christ, ' cometh to the Father but by Me ' (John xiv, 6).

Our Government has made a public profession of belief in God ; and for this we are thankful. It was not a recognition of the God of the Old Testament. It could only be a profession of faith in the God of the Gospel, and therefore of faith in Christ. Among Christians the meaning of the word ' God ' must not be so attenuated that it may be applied indifferently to the Jupiter of Olympus, to the Allah of Mecca or to the Donar of the ancient Germans.

The second great religious value of the Old Testament is the idea of redemption. The Gospel is the ' good tidings ' of ' eternal redemption ' (Heb. ix, 12). We read in the Gospel of to-day : ' Lift up your heads, for your redemption is at hand ' (Luke xxi, 28). But throughout the Old Testament the same voice resounds : ' I know that my Redeemer liveth ' (Job xix, 25). ' Let the clouds rain the just ; let the earth be opened and bud forth a saviour ' (Is. xlv, 8). Compare with this the religious books of the Indians, which preach the end of all in Nirvana : the

tidings of despair. A Book which brings the good tidings of redemption—‘ Shake off the dust. . . . Thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee ’ (Is. lii, 1 ; lx, 1) —a Book which arouses us from torpor and despair, is a benefactor to humanity.

In the messianic prophecies the portrait of the Redeemer is filled in feature by feature. He is hailed from afar as the conqueror of Satan, as the desired of nations, as the seed of the royal house, as the Wisdom of God, as the light of the Gentiles, as the wondrous child, as the mighty hero, as the Father of the world to come and the Prince of peace, as the lamb at the slaughter. The prophecies are supplemented by types, especially by the Paschal lamb, in whose blood the people were delivered from captivity in Egypt. Thus marvellously did the finger of God draw the line that leads straight through the centuries to the Redemption.

### III. TWO GRAVE WARNINGS

Let us venerate the Scriptures of the Old Testament ! We do not set the Old Testament and the New on the same level. The Sacred Scriptures of the New Testament, the Gospels,



the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse must hold the place of honour. But the Scriptures of the Old Testament are also inspired, and therefore they are sacred books, precious stones for the building of God's kingdom, priceless values for our religious guidance. And therefore the Church has stretched forth her protecting hand over the Scriptures of the Old Testament ; she has gathered together the forty-five books of the Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the New into one volume, and she has used the text of the Old Testament also in her liturgy. By accepting these books Christianity does not become a Jewish religion. These books were not composed by Jews ; they are inspired by the Holy Ghost, and therefore they are the word of God, they are God's books. The writers of them were God's pencils, the Psalm-singers were harps in the hand of God, the prophets were announcers of God's revelation. It is for this reason that the Scriptures of the Old Testament are worthy of credence and veneration for all time. Antagonism to the Jews of to-day must not be extended to the books of pre-Christian Judaism.

In the New Testament, in the Epistle to the Hebrews (ch. 11), Abel, Enoch, and other

figures of Old Testament history are held up as models of faith to be imitated by Christians. St. Francis of Assisi once picked up a scrap of paper from the ground. 'Let no man tread this under foot,' he said, 'for the name of God can be written thereon.' Let no man trample under foot the Sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament; for the name of God is written there. Cardinal Manning once said to the Jews: 'I should not understand my own religion, had I no reverence for yours.'

Let us venerate the Scriptures of the Old Testament! And let us not allow Bible history to be abolished in our schools! These biblical stories have a great educational value in the school, so long as they are well selected and told in attractive language, and if the teacher knows how to make them live.

Side by side with the Bible there is a second source of revelation, the Tradition of the Church. Side by side with the Book stands the living teacher, the authority of the Church. Beside the good pasture stands the good shepherd, beside the precious materials for the building stands the good architect. Therefore the anti-Moses movement does not affect us Catholics so vitally as our separated brethren, who regard the Bible as the sole foundation of

their faith. To these separated brethren we stretch forth our hand to make common cause with them in defence of the sacred books of the Old Testament, so that we may save them for the German nation and preserve this precious treasury of doctrine for the Christian schools.

The German classics honoured the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Biblical quotations are to be found in the earliest pieces of German literature, in the Song of Roland, in the song of the Holy Grail, in Wolfram of Eschenbach's Parsifal. Many of the most ancient specimens of epigrammatic poetry contain ideas, and even verbal quotations, taken from the Wisdom books of the Old Testament. Walter von Wogelweide and other minnesingers were familiar with the pre-Christian Bible. In the golden age of German literature we have Klopstock, the poet of the *Messias*, Herder, the panegyrist of Hebrew poetry, and Goethe who, if not filled with the religious spirit of the Bible, was enamoured of the beauty of its language. In modern comedy and drama, in mystery-plays and in prose we find numerous quotations from the Old Testament, though—as in Hebbel's *Judith*—it is often merely the letter and not the spirit of the Bible that is repro-

duced. If we are to repudiate the Old Testament and banish it from our schools and from our national libraries, then we must disown our German classics. We must cancel many phrases from the German language ; we must no longer speak of the forbidden fruit or of the sins that cry to Heaven for vengeance, of the little Benjamin or the chaste Joseph, of Egyptian darkness or the confusion of Babylon, of the olive-branch of peace or the scape-goat. We must disown the intellectual history of our nation. Let us venerate the sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament !

A second warning : Let us endeavour with the help of God's grace to fulfil the Old Testament in ourselves. Christ did not come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil them. On another occasion He said : ' This that is written must yet be fulfilled in Me ' (Luke xxii, 37). How often we read in the Gospel of St. Matthew : this thing or that happened, that the word of the prophet might be fulfilled ! What does it mean, to fulfil the Old Testament ? To fulfil means to complete and to finish that which is incomplete ; to fill to the brim that which is half-empty (the metaphor is taken from a dry measure or a glass) ; to make perfect that which is imperfect.

To fulfil means, metaphorically speaking, to take the kernel out of the shell, to pass from the preparatory school of the Old Testament into the high school of the Gospel, to turn from the type to the prototype. The Old Testament was good in itself, but in comparison with the New Testament it is like a work unfinished, half-done, incomplete. The New Testament completed God's revelation to man : ' When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away ' (1 Cor. xiii, 10).

The people of Israel, through the Mother of the Saviour, were kinsmen of Christ. But in the kingdom of God ties of blood are not sufficient. The Precursor told his hearers point-blank : ' Think not to say within yourselves : We have Abraham for our father. For I tell you that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham ' (Matt. iii, 9). The Saviour Himself was once told while He was preaching : ' Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, desiring to see Thee. Who answering said to them : My mother and My brethren are they who hear the word of God and do it ' (Luke viii, 20). Christ, therefore, rejects the ties of blood ; He demands the tie of faith, the hearing of the word of God. Whoever is united with Christ by baptism and by

living faith is mother or brother to Him. So the question is not : Was Christ a Jew or an Aryan ? It is : Are we members of Christ by baptism and by faith ? ' For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision ; but a new creature ' (Gal. vi, 15). The Old Testament was founded upon ties of blood, the New Testament is founded upon the tie of faith. More grievous than the ' Sin against Blood ' is the sin against the faith.

Christ is the personal fulfilment of the Old Testament. In Christ the law and the prophets were fulfilled even to the jot and the tittle, that is, even to the tiniest letters of the Hebrew alphabet. We, too, must grow out of the Old Testament, we must ' fulfil ' the Old Testament in ourselves. In particular this means that :

We must fulfil the prayers of the Old Testament. The Psalms, those prayers of immortal beauty, have been adopted by the Church in her breviary ; so, too, have those truly heroic prayers of the Machabees (1 Mach. iii, 59 *seq.*). The prayers of the Old Testament receive their fulfilment, their perfection, when they cease to be mechanical lip-service, and become prayer in spirit and in truth, prayer in the name of Jesus.

We must fulfil prayer and alms-deeds. The prophets commanded holy fasting (Joel ii, 19). But in later times fasting was profaned by pharisaical hypocrisy, almsgiving was blazoned forth at the street corners. Fasting and alms-deeds are fulfilled in the spirit of the Gospel when fasting is observed in humility of spirit, and alms are given, not from pharisaical vanity, but from real love for our needy brethren.

We must fulfil the ceremonial cleansings of the Old Testament. What a number of washings and cleansings were required before the leper was declared clean, before one who was defiled was 'cleansed as to the flesh by the blood of goats and of oxen' (Heb. ix, 13)! We fulfil these usages when we cleanse our souls from the leprosy of sin by sorrow and confession, when we purify ourselves inwardly in the blood of the Lamb of God.

We must fulfil the sacrificial laws of the Old Testament. No more do we offer animals as bleeding victims on the steaming altar; we fulfil the Old Testament by taking part in the clean oblation which, according to the words of the prophet (Mal. i, 11), 'is offered to the name of the Lord among the nations from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof.'

So everyone, through Christ and with Him and in Him, must fulfil the Old Testament in himself. Only then have we passed from the kingdom of the shadows of the Old Testament into the kingdom of the light of the Gospel, from the letter of the service of God to the spirit of Divine sonship, from Judaism to Christianity, when we have passed from lip-service to prayer in the name of Jesus, from pharisaical fasting and alms-deeds to humility and love, from external cleanliness to purity of heart, from the offering of bloody hands to the pure sacrifice of our altars. Only then have we grown out of the Judaism of the Old Testament, only then are we in Christianity, when we have the Spirit of Christ and His love within us. Amen.

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## THE ETHICAL VALUES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THEIR PERFECTION IN THE GOSPEL

‘What things soever were written, were written for our learning, that through patience and the comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope.’  
(Rom. xv, 4.)

**I**N our first Advent sermon we studied the religious values of the sacred books of pre-Christian Judaism: the conception of God, which reached a high level unique in the history of ancient civilization; the idea of redemption, which shines with the light of the morning-star through the Advent of the Old Covenant. We spoke of the permanent liturgical values of the Old Testament, of the Psalms and other texts which have been adopted in the breviary, in the missal, and generally in the liturgy of the Church. The very names of Easter and Pentecost in the Christian calendar come down to us from

early biblical times : ' These things were done in a figure of us ' (1 Cor. x, 6). And when the priest of the New Covenant offers the sacrifice of the Holy Mass he prays that God may accept this sacrifice as He accepted the sacrifice of Abel, the sacrifice of Abraham and the sacrifice of Melchisedech. We also indicated the educational values of the books of the Old Testament, and demanded, also on this ground, veneration for the books of Sion, and the continuance of the teaching of Bible history in German schools. Much of the Old Testament had a merely ephemeral value, such as the long histories of wars, the genealogies with their long lists of names, and—partially at any rate—the comminatory sermons of the prophets. But it also contains much which, with more or less of modification and improvement, possesses permanent value for the period of the Gospel.

But the most serious charges are made nowadays, not against the religious values of the Old Testament, but against its ethical values. Modern objections against Bible teaching in schools are based on the ground that the Patriarch Jacob, the fraudulent inheritor, Joseph the Egyptian, the usurious hoarder of corn, and other monsters, are far from being examples of morality for school children.

And so the Sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament, which all Christians, of whatever denomination, treat with reverence, are spoken of in blasphemous terms which may not be repeated in this holy place. Therefore I have chosen as the subject of my second Advent sermon : The ethical values of the Old Testament and their perfection in the Gospel. To-day's epistle opens with the words of St. Paul : ' What things soever were written, were written for our learning.' The Spirit of God, who inspired the Sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament equally with those of the New, is not only a Spirit of religious truth, He is also a Spirit of holiness and of moral purity. Therefore His books are for our instruction in morals as well as in religion. The study and meditation of the Scriptures should not only make us grow in faith, but also make us better and holier. To-day again we are concerned only with pre-Christian Judaism. And we place this meditation on the ethical values of the Old Testament under the patronage of the Immaculate Virgin, that stainless and lily-white blossom of the Old Testament, the outstanding model of ethical perfection.

THE BRIGHTER SIDE OF ETHICAL TEACHING IN  
THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. The supreme rule of ethical conduct is the will of God. Therefore the Psalmist prays : ' Lord, show me Thy ways. Send me Thy light that I may know Thy ways. Gird me with Thy strength that I may walk in Thy ways unswervingly.' The ten commandments of Sinai express the will of God in a form which is at once most brief and infinitely profound. If necessary, the ten commandments might have been discovered by man through the use of his own unaided reason. Evidently, if men are to live together in a manner befitting their dignity, then they must not kill, betray, or rob one another. The human mind might have learned this for itself. But when these ten commandments come to us as a Divine Revelation, as a document signed by God Himself, they are endowed with a clearer evidence and a higher authority, and it becomes obvious that they cannot be changed by man at will. God says that you must conduct your individual and social life in this way : ' You shall believe in the one God, you shall not take His name in vain, you shall keep His day holy. You shall honour your father and your mother, you shall not kill, or break your marriage troth, you

shall not steal or deceive.' These ten commandments are the eternal and fundamental values of the moral order, the eternal and fundamental laws for all social order, the eternal norms for all civic law and jurisprudence, the eternal corner-stones for the ethics of family life, the lighthouse which with its ten beams still sends out its radiance.

The Decalogue of Sinai infinitely excels in ethical values all the gentile laws of antiquity, especially in two respects : First, because in the Decalogue the moral order is founded upon belief in God. On the first of the tables are written the duties of man towards God : ' You shall adore the Lord your God, venerate His name, keep His day holy.' On the second, the duties of man towards his fellows : ' You shall keep family life sacred, respect the life and health of your fellow-man, keep your plighted word, respect the property and the spouse of your neighbour.' Hence there is no respect for the rights of men, no national morality, where there is no fear of God, no religion. The law of the Lord cannot be divorced from the Lord of the law. There can be no moral order in the world—were it even a Paradise—if the moral order is not based upon belief in God.

The second great superiority of the Decalogue consists in this, that it not only forbids external malice in word or in deed, but also requires that a man's inner thoughts be regulated and subordinated to God's will : ' Be ye holy, as the Lord your God is holy ' (Lev. xix, 2, 26 ; xxi, 8). The laws of Babylon do not reach this high ethical standard ; for even what is good in their teaching is mingled with superstition and magic, and their gods, especially the goddess Ishtar, are far from being models of morality. The brightest side of the ethical doctrine of the Old Testament is to be found in the ten commandments of Sinai.

2. It is in keeping with the essential character of the Bible as the Book of truth, that the moral virtue of veracity is strongly emphasized therein, and all lies and double-dealing unequivocally condemned. The eighth commandment : ' Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour ' (Exod. xx, 16), is primarily a law for the safeguarding of veracity. To understand the truth you must yourself be true. You must not hesitate between truth and falsehood. ' A lie is a foul blot in a man ' (Eccli. xx, 26). It is pharisaical to speak ' with a double heart ' (Ps. xi, 2).

Here is a law which might at first sight seem strange to us : 'Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together. Thou shalt not wear a garment that is woven of woollen and linen together' (Deut. xxii, 10). In the proverbial language of the East it means a command to avoid all that savours of double-dealing and deceit.

3. The ethical teaching of the Old Testament appears to advantage also in the book of Proverbs and the other Sapiential books. First they give us homely practical rules for good manners and hygiene. Thus, you must not take the first place at table, or choose the best morsels for yourself (Prov. xxiii, 1-3 ; Eccli, xxxi, 12-21) ; you must not listen at doors (Eccli, xxi, 23), nor out-stay your welcome (Prov. xxv, 17). They are full of proverbs, some of which, e.g. : 'Ill gotten goods bring no blessing' (Prov. x, 2) ; 'Pride comes before a fall' (Prov. xvi, 18), we have adopted for our own use. These practical rules for daily life might be found just as easily in Indian or Arabian books of a similar kind. They only show that the whole of our daily life must be regulated according to the moral order.

But these books contain a higher wisdom besides. Not the wisdom of the street-corners,

nor the wisdom of the learned schools, but the conduct which God requires of us, of which the beginning and the end is the fear of the Lord (Prov. i, 6 ; viii, 19 ; 6-9) : ‘ Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom. And to depart from evil is understanding ’ (Job xxviii, 28). Such is the wisdom of these inspired books. The frequent repetition of the words, ‘ Hear, my son,’ and their didactic tone show that they were used for the instruction and education of the young. Hence reverence for parents, for old age, and for women is often inculcated (Prov. xvi, 31 ; xiv, 1). In this last point the ethical teaching of the Old Testament shows a marked superiority over contemporary practice. Outside Palestine the ancient East treated women as slaves without rights. In the Bible, on the contrary, a woman is called ‘ a crown to her husband ’ (Prov. xii, 4), and in the fourth commandment, ‘ Thou shalt honour thy father and thy mother,’ the mother is set upon the same level as the father in the eyes of the children. Such reverence for women was not revealed by oriental ‘ flesh and blood.’

The last chapter of the book of Proverbs contains a song in praise of the ideal woman ; and the portrait of a woman as God wills her



to be presents these five characteristics : devotion to her family, joy in work and domestic service, mildness towards servants and the poor, wisdom, and clemency. Here, surely, is an ethical model in the light of which a woman may examine her conscience. And a similar model for men may be found in the thirty-first chapter of the book of Job. The virtues praised in a man are moral self-control and conjugal fidelity, honesty in business (he was evidently a merchant), respect for the rights of servants and workers, compassion for the poor. And the motive for this is that in the eyes of the great Lord in Heaven both employers and labourers are equal. These two chapters with their models for men and women represent the zenith of the ethical teaching of the Old Testament.

4. Even the rules about food, upon which so much ridicule has been cast, were to serve as maxims of ethical conduct. You must not eat the flesh of an animal which has fed upon another animal (Exod. xxii, 31). You must not defile your soul by eating the flesh of an animal that creeps upon the earth (Lev. xi, 44). The meaning of these regulations is : You must abstain from all that is beastly, from all that savours of dust and the serpent. The

same idea is expressed in the picture of the Immaculate Virgin setting her foot upon the serpent in the dust. Avoid everything that is animal, everything that is pagan ! The detailed ordinances concerning what the Israelites might or might not eat remind us of the words of St. Paul about the ' yoke ' of the law (Gal. v, 1) ; and we wonder whether the children of those days learned by heart these long lists of meats with the distinction between clean and unclean animals. The meaning underlying all these food restrictions was : With the Gentiles, at whose meals you may find the flesh of swine and other unclean animals, you must have no common table ; above all you must have no social relations with them. These laws, therefore, set up a wall of separation between Jew and Gentile. Subsequently, they became unnecessary, when that wall of separation was removed by the revelation made to St. Peter (Acts xi, 5-10).

5. More convincing than the written word are the living examples of ethical greatness which show forth the moral values of the Old Testament. The Patriarch Joseph in the land of bondage sees the hour approaching when he must depart this life and be gathered to his fathers. He had been no usurer. As an

instrument of Providence, and as a shrewd economist, he had stored up in the royal barns all the superfluous corn that remained during the years of plenty. He had not thrown it on to the world-market of the Phœnicians. He had reserved it for the lean years to come, and thus saved the nation from famine. This was not making a corner in wheat ; because he had not been trying to enrich himself. On the contrary he had rendered a national service. About to die, therefore, like his father Jacob he gathered his sons about his bedside : ‘ After my death,’ he said, ‘ God will visit you, and will make you go up out of this land to the land which He swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. . . . Carry my bones with you out of this place.’ (Gen. 1, 23) The deliverer would one day reach the Promised Land, and then his shadow would fall upon the tomb of the Patriarchs in Mambre. What an ethical example we can find in this faith in God’s word ! Disbelief is darkness ; faith is a bright light, which casts its brilliance even over the dark hour of death.

Another great model is Moses, the leader of his people, the greatest lawgiver of antiquity, learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and

equipped, moreover, with the miraculous staff of Heaven. Three mountains stand as landmarks on his life's journey : Horeb, where on the lonely heights he received his vocation and mission from the burning bush ; Sinai, where in silent retreat he held converse with the Lord ; Nebo, on whose peak he beheld from afar the Promised Land. The great leader has been fashioned in marble by Michelangelo ; Archbishop Parker has sung his praises in an epic poem. Moses was great indeed when he raised his miraculous rod and put the Egyptian sorcerers to confusion. He was still greater when he stormed against the dance round the golden calf, and in holy wrath shattered the tables of the law on the rocks. But he was greatest of all when, before the Lord, he declared himself ready to offer his life for his rebellious people : Lord, ' either forgive them this trespass, or if thou do not, strike me out of the book that thou hast written ' (Exod. xxxii, 31). What moral grandeur, what a love for his people, a love strong as death, is shown in this prayer of the great leader !

A third model is Job, the patient Job. His inner conflict is described with a masterly hand in the book which bears his name. First we hear words of silent submission : ' If we have

received good things at the hand of God, why should we not receive evil ' (ii, 10) ? But then shrinking nature rebels, and with a cry of impatience he curses the day on which he was born. Then follows an alternation between hope and despair, between the will to live and the wish to die. Finally comes the triumphant issue of the struggle : ' I know that my Redeemer liveth ' (xix, 25). Job is not a model of patience ready made, he is a model of patience achieved with effort ; and precisely for that reason he is a model for us. A model for us because we, too, must always fight our inner conflicts strong in the faith : ' My Redeemer liveth.'

' What things soever were written, were written for our learning, that through patience and the comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope ' ; hope which conquers all doubt and overcomes all fear.

#### THE DARKER SIDE OF THE ETHICAL TEACHING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

While we take up the defence of the Old Testament against the charge of utter worthlessness, we have no desire to paint the picture

of early Jewish morality in overglowing colours. Real life, in all religions and in all races, always remains far below the ideal of the moral law. Beside the many lights in the picture there are dark shades, beside truth there is falsehood, beside wisdom folly, beside faith unbelief, beside high moral values there is much that is tawdry and inferior.

1. The worst charge made against Old Testament morality to-day is that it is based upon a system of rewards. In recent years the fourth commandment has been stigmatized as un-German because it proposes a reward for its observance : ' Honour thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee ' (Exod. xx, 12). In the *Sportpalast* at Berlin on November 13th, 1933, the German Christians passed the following resolution : ' We expect our national Churches to shake themselves free of all that is un-German, in particular of the Old Testament and its Jewish morality of rewards.' It is true that the just men of the Old Testament expected as a reward for their piety to be blessed also with earthly goods. They hoped that their barns might be filled with corn and their presses run over with wine (Prov. iii, 10) ; that the fear

of God might bring them a crown of honour (iv, 8) and a long life (x, 27). But it is not true to say that the fourth commandment teaches children a mercenary attitude with regard to God, that it encourages and consecrates an un-German spirit of self-seeking. Undoubtedly the ethical ideal demands that we should walk unswervingly in the path of virtue and order our lives according to the moral law, out of the pure love of God and goodness, and without any hope or expectation of reward. But to such heights only the saints will soar, of whom one could pray: 'I love thee, Lord, not because Thou makest me happy, nor because Thou savest me from hell; but I love thee simply for Thine own sake.' If a teacher is wise, in explaining the fourth commandment he will not begin by proposing to children the highest of ethical motives. And even the average adult in moments of weakness and weariness will doubtless cling to God's promises, and hope to be blessed with long life and prosperity. If anyone comes to me and asserts that he does good simply for goodness' sake and without expecting a reward, then I say to him: 'My friend, either you are a saint, one of the very few, or else you are a self-deluding hypocrite.' Are the opponents of the Old Testament

promises in reality so remote from all desire of reward that in return for their services they never expect any recognition, any rise in salary, any promotion—in short, any reward? When Christ was asked by His Apostles, ‘What therefore shall we have?’ (Matt. xix, 27), He answered: ‘Your reward is great’ (Luke vi, 23, 35). ‘Learn of Me because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls’ (Matt. xi, 29). An ethical doctrine which is intended for all men must admit imperfect motives as well as perfect ones.

2. Another shade in the Old Testament picture is to be found in certain narratives and other texts which are ethically scandalous. Onan gave his name to a frightful crime. Tamar prostituted her honour in the public streets. Other passages tell us of the immodesty of Cham, of the daughters of Lot, and of Rahab, the harlot of Jericho. In the Book of Proverbs, Folly appears in the role of a prostitute. In the Canticle of Canticles there are scandalous passages, and also in the Book of Ezechiel.

Holy Scripture relates these all too human events in the language of the time, in the language of a primitive and pastoral people. But Scripture never condones immodesty, never calls moral what is really immoral. On



the contrary; the Scriptures tell us how punishment followed hard upon the heels of crime, as in the case of Onan; and the prophets, who never hesitated to speak the truth boldly even to the great ones of the earth, pronounced God's sentence upon the royal adulterer (2 Kings xii, 10 *seq.*). So long as God uses men, and not the angels of Heaven, as His instruments in the work of salvation, so long will the all too human element be apparent. None will be so pharisaical as to maintain that such crimes have entirely disappeared among the nations of the New Testament. The public life of our people, thank God, during the past few months has been swept clean with iron brooms of much of its immorality; but it would be Jewish pharisaism to thank God that we are any better than other nations, or that our capitals are gardens of virtue in comparison with Sodom and Gomorrha.

But it is true that the complete Bible is not a book to be placed in the hands of young school children. The Scriptures were written for grown-up people. The synagogue of the Old Testament withheld the Canticle of Canticles and the book of Ezechiel from the young, lest the realism of certain passages

might be a source of danger to hot-blooded and passionate temperaments. Instead of the complete Bible it is sufficient to set before school children a selection of the most beautiful of the Bible stories. To remove the Bible altogether from the school would be to blot out many a star in the children's firmament. Hence, in the light of what has been said, we cannot approve the statement issued by the Bremen teaching authority in 1905 : ' The ethical outlook of the Old Testament is foreign to our times.' This may be true of particular passages, but as a whole the Old Testament remains as the wondrous history of the Divine art of teaching, where allowance is made for the deficiencies of the pupils, and yet the end is achieved notwithstanding.

3. A still darker shade in the picture, from the Christian point of view, are the comminatory Psalms and the hymns of vengeance in the Old Testament. Thus the singer of the 68th Psalm prays : ' Lord, come to my help ' in order to slay his enemies. The singer of the 108th Psalm desires that his enemy may be encompassed on every side by curses as by a garment, that they may enter into him as the water that he drinks, and lay hold of his bones as the oil which he uses for his anointing. In

the 138th Psalm the singer declares in the sight of God that he hates his enemies with a perfect hatred. These enemies, probably men of the type of Heliodorus, desecrators of the Holy Place, are regarded by the Psalmist, the defender of the Holy Place, as his own personal enemies, and in his zeal for God's glory he thinks it his duty to pronounce upon them the curses which God pronounced upon all that is Satanic. In other hymns of vengeance we may see traces of the vendetta which was then still in vogue. Christ abolished these hymns of hate : ' You have heard that it was said to them of old : An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth ' (Matt. v, 38). ' But I say to you : Love your enemies. Do good to them that hate you, pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.' In the old days the curse had gone forth : ' Sevenfold vengeance shall be taken for Cain ; but for Lamech seventy times sevenfold ' (Gen. iv, 24). For this ancient curse, the first song in the Bible, Christ, with an evident play upon the words, substituted the new precept to forgive the brother that has offended, not seven times only, but seventy times seven (Matt. xviii, 22).

Here is the law of Christian ethics which the German spirit finds it hardest to understand.

The precept to love one's enemies does not abrogate the law of self-respect nor the right to self-assertion. But in the kingdom of Christ besides a power of action there is a power of endurance, besides the active virtues there are the so-called passive virtues of patience and compassion, which involve an even greater moral strength and heroism. There is no other alternative : either we are disciples of Christ or else we relapse into the Judaism of antiquity with its hymns of hate.

4. Then there are the biblical characters which present another shade in the picture. For the enemies of the Old Testament, Jacob the Patriarch is proverbially the literal 'Jacob,' that is, the thief of his brother's inheritance, the betrayer. Aided by his mother, by misrepresentation he fraudulently obtained from his blind father the blessing due to the first-born, and thus deprived his brother of his birthright. The Scriptures tell us this ; but they do not say that it was a good thing. We need not attempt to whitewash Jacob, or to acquit him of the charge of fraud. Jacob's crime is admittedly a dark blot upon his character.

But like the rest, this also was written 'for our learning.' Almighty God is able to write

straight even on crooked lines, He is able to turn even the wickedness of men to good account in His plan of salvation. The right of the first-born was not merely the right to inherit earthly goods and power. Among the Patriarchs it was also the right to be the vehicle of the promise, and to be an ancestor of the Redeemer. The fact that this right was transferred from Esau to Jacob is a proof that birth, mere flesh and blood, is not the decisive factor here. God is free in His dispensation of grace, and is able, if He chooses, to appoint a younger son to be a forefather of His Anointed.

Even the character of the heroic Judith of Bethulia is marred by the shadow of deceit. Her city is in dire distress, besieged by the Assyrians. Unless help comes soon, the city with all its inhabitants will be lost, and that, according to the existing laws of war, will mean death and extinction. So Judith bedecks herself in her finest array, and goes forth from the city into the camp of the enemy to slay Holofernes. She lies to the sentinels at the outposts, saying that she wants to go over to the enemy as the cause of her people is lost. With a further lie she makes her way to the tent of Holofernes, gains his confidence by a trick,

and cuts off his head (Judith viii-xv). Judith, no doubt, behaved in good faith, believing that she was allowed to tell a lie in order to save her people and her city. But the custodians of morality arise and declare—in a book which is widely read : ‘The Old Testament is full of Jewish lying and deceit.’ Nevertheless, one might perhaps ask them the question : If our nation and our land were in the same mortal peril as Bethulia, would you let your people and your fatherland be lost, and with your tender conscience still declare : We must never tell a lie? Would you seriously put this heroine of the Bible, with her song of divine praise (Judith xvi), on a lower level than the German Kriemhild, with her hymn of hate? Which of you is without sin, that you may cast the first stone at the heroine of Bethulia? Notwithstanding her lie, Judith remains a model of womanly virtue, not because she lied, but because she loved her people and her country.

Others have faults to find with the writer of the Book of Ecclesiastes. The author of this little book—Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher—walked far in the ways of error before he came to believe in God and in the life to come. He describes these errors of his youth with the

candour of an Augustine in his Confessions. At first, he says, he desired to enjoy life according to the maxims of the Epicureans—to eat, drink and be merry. And so he wandered far from God, declared all things to be vanity—*omnia vanitas*—and abandoned the faith of his youth. At length, however, he recovered his faith in God, and to his contemporaries he utters the warning : ‘Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth. . . . God will bring all things into judgement’ (Eccle. xii, 1, 13 *seq.*). In spite of his errors Ecclesiastes is a model for young men to imitate, not because he went astray, but because by good will and by the grace of God he found his faith once more. And this, too, is written ‘for our learning.’ The biblical characters are not saints ready made. They, like us, felt one law in their mind and ‘another law in their members’ (Rom. vii, 23). But they had the nobility of soul to acknowledge their faults and to be converted from the evil of their ways, and precisely for this reason they are ethical models for the youth of all time. The power of divine grace is perfected in the weakness of human nature (2 Cor. xii, 9).

Christ did not suppress the ethical teaching of the Old Testament. In the Gospel He

elevated the moral standards of the past. He proposed higher ethical ideals, He raised the edifice of morality to more lofty heights, and He gave richer graces to help souls to reach them. 'Where sin abounded, grace did more abound' (Rom. v, 20). He adopted the Decalogue as the basis of Christian morality, but He gave it a new value by making it His own law. He synthesized all the laws of antiquity in the one law of love and thereby, as His Apostle said (Rom. xiii, 10), fulfilled the whole of the law. It is not for us to declare unclean that which Christ Himself has declared clean, that which He has adopted in His Gospel.

What we must do is to free ourselves from those faults which cast a shadow over the ethical teaching of the Old Testament. The slogan, 'Deliver us from the Old Testament,' may have a meaning for us too. But it must mean : Deliver us from the imperfections of the Old Testament, from the sin of Cham, Onan, and Thamar. 'You, brethren, have been called unto liberty,' writes the Apostle (Gal. v, 13) ; that is, you have cast off the yoke of the Old Law ; 'only make not liberty an occasion to the flesh.' Deliverance from the Old Testament can only mean for us deliverance from that pharisaism which says so little



of the bright side of Old Testament morality and so much of its imperfections ; which in its own nation sees only the bright side and in other nations only the imperfections. Deliverance from the curses and the hymns of vengeance of the Old Testament ! Hatred is not a Christian virtue, no matter against whom it is directed. The spirit of revenge is a relapse into ancient Judaism. Deliverance from the deceitfulness of a Jacob and from the voluptuousness of an Ecclesiastes ! We must free ourselves from the imperfections of the Old Testament.

The passions of nature unredeemed are obvious enough in some of the figures of the Old Testament, even in some of the ancestors of the Redeemer. But the voice of nature unredeemed cries only the louder for the Saviour on that account. In spite of all, there is an ethical grandeur in that longing of pre-Christian mankind for the coming of the Redeemer, in the tenacity with which they clung to hope. The just of the Old Testament saw Him not, and yet believed in Him ; with their faith and with their longing they went forth to meet Him from afar. We, the children that are near to Him, must not let them outstrip us. During these weeks of Advent,

therefore, let us prepare our souls and go forth to meet the Child of Christmas. Blessed are they that long for the Saviour, for their longing will be fulfilled. Amen.

## THE SOCIAL VALUES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

‘When thou reapest the corn of thy land, thou shalt not cut down all that is on the face of the earth down to the very ground ; nor shalt thou gather the ears that remain. 10. Neither shalt thou gather the bunches and grapes that fall down in thy vineyard, but shalt leave them to the poor and the stranger to take. I am the Lord your God. 11. You shall not steal. You shall not lie ; neither shall any man deceive his neighbour. 12. Thou shalt not swear falsely by My name, nor profane the name of thy God. I am the Lord. 13. Thou shalt not calumniate thy neighbour, nor oppress him by violence. The wages of him that hath been hired by thee, shall not abide with thee until the morning. 14. Thou shalt not speak evil of the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind ; but thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, because I am the Lord. 15. Thou shalt not do that which is unjust, nor judge unjustly. Respect not the person of the poor ; nor honour the countenance of the mighty. But judge thy neighbour accord-

ing to justice. . . . 18. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. I am the Lord. 19. Keep ye My laws. (Lev. xix, 9-19.)

**T**HE Sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament are a gift from the Spirit of Truth, and therefore a treatise of religious instruction. The Sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament are a gift from the Spirit of Holiness and therefore a book of ethical doctrine. The Sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament are a gift from the Spirit of Justice and Love and therefore they teach the basic truths of the social order. On the first Sunday of Advent we studied the religious values of the Old Testament, on the second Sunday its ethical values, and to-day, the third Sunday, we intend to examine the social values of these sacred books. By 'social' I mean all that pertains to the life of men in common, all that contributes to social life, all that concerns care for the poor, the status of the individual in family and state, the rights of labour, the public administration of justice, and political economy.

For the purposes of our subject two groups of books are especially to be considered : the Pentateuch, which contains the text of the laws, and the books of the Prophets, which contain

the explanation of these laws and provide for their observance. I follow the sequence of ideas in the extract which I have just read to you from the book of Leviticus.

Is this pulpit the place for a sermon on the laws and economics of ancient Judaism? It is ; because the Holy Ghost, the fiery tongues of the Gospel, spoke also through the prophets of the Old Testament. In that ancient theocracy the laws of the State were also the laws of God. The one book, the Mosaic Torah, was at the same time a religious catechism and a code of civil law. The priests were at the same time ministers of the sanctuary and public law officials. The prophets were simultaneously guardians of the religious and moral order and architects of the social order. I am not going to give you an academic lecture on these questions. To-day again the sermon will be one which has practical applications for personal life. May the Holy Ghost, who spoke through the prophets, enlighten our minds and hearts !

#### I. THE POOR LAW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The same God who in the Gospel had compassion on the multitude because it had nothing

to eat, in earlier times had made special laws for the protection of the poor : ‘ When thou reapest the corn of thy land, thou shalt not cut down all that is on the face of the earth to the very ground ; nor shalt thou gather the ears that remain. Neither shalt thou gather the bunches and grapes that fall down in thy vineyard, but shalt leave them to the poor and the strangers to take.’ In the fifth book of the Pentateuch we find the same law given in nearly the same words (Deut. xxiv, 19-22). So the owner of private property must not be greedy and miserly ; he must not collect the last ears from the cornfield nor the last grapes from his vineyard, nor the last olive from his olive trees ; he must leave what remains for the poor and the stranger. This law in its popular and homely form must have served as an education for the young. We can well imagine that at every harvest parents reminded their children of the rights of the poor and the stranger.

Another law requires tithes for the poor every three years. Every third year all holders of land, great or small, must set before their doors a tenth part of the harvest for the Levites, who owned no property, and also for the widows and orphans (Deut. xiv, 28).

Every seventh year, the so-called 'year of rest to the land,' anything that grew of itself was to be left for servants and labourers and strangers (Lev. xxv, 4-7). To many it may come as news that the law : 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' is found in the Mosaic Pentateuch before it appears in the Gospel (Lev. xix, 18). And in quite early days we hear the precept to help others as readily as possible (Prov. iii, 28) and with a cheerful countenance : 'Thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor close thy hand' from thy needy brother (Deut. xv, 7).

Similarly the liturgy of the Old Testament contains popular teaching concerning the rights of the poor. On the fortieth day after childbirth young mothers brought their first-born into the Temple, and had to make an offering of one lamb and two doves. If they were too poor to offer the lamb, then the two doves sufficed (Lev. xii, 6-8). If a man or woman had to make a sin-offering, a lamb or a goat likewise was required, or if their economic condition did not allow of this, a pair of doves (Lev. v, 6). In the case of the extremely poor the law was content with a single wild dove, which might be caught in the fields, or even with a handful of meal, which was thrown on

the sacrificial fire (Lev. v, 11). The poor man who possessed no cattle was not to be excluded from the Temple or from the benefits of the sacrifice simply because he was poor. This is the meaning of the poor laws as we find them in the liturgy. The gentleness and considerateness of the poor laws of ancient Judaism have remained a valuable model for later times.

## II. PRIVATE LAW IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The second idea in our extract from the Pentateuch introduces in its broad outlines the Private Law of the Old Testament.

1. In the laws, 'You shall not steal, nor lie, nor deceive your neighbour,' as already in the Decalogue itself, the right of private property—that mighty pillar of the social order—is recognized by God and sealed with His seal. The times are not far distant when we used to hear the cry in Communistic circles: 'Private property is a theft from the people.' Fortunately these voices are now silenced. When the land of Chanaan was divided and distributed among the people of Israel, each tribe, with the exception of the priestly tribe of Levi, received a certain portion of land which in its



turn was divided among the families of the tribe. The economic distribution of the Holy Land had a religious significance ; for with the portion of land assigned to it each family received a guarantee that it should also have a portion in the kingdom of the Anointed. Economic ideas and religious ideas were always associated.

2. The law and the prophets not only ensured that in public life the rights of God should be observed, they also took measures to protect the rights of men. They vindicated man's dignity, his right to honour and liberty, and the equality of all men without fear or favour. Where there is respect for the rights of God, there also you will find respect for the rights of men. The individual retains his own responsibility as against his family. Closely though he is bound to his family for weal or woe, yet the Mosaic law insists upon his own personal responsibility : ' The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children for the fathers ; but everyone shall die for his own sin ' (Deut. xxiv, 16). The prophets re-enacted and declared the same law : ' The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, and the father shall not bear the iniquity of the son ' (Ezech. xviii, 20). The

Gospel emphasizes this personal responsibility even more strongly : the individual must suffer even the enmity of his family for the sake of Christ (Matt. x, 35 *seq.*).

The individual retains his personal freedom as against the masses. He has the right to resist the dictation of the majority : 'Thou shalt not follow the multitude to do evil ; neither shalt thou yield in judgement to the opinion of the most part.' These noble words are the proto-gospel of personal liberty. Liberty may be abused, as when it serves as a cloak for malice (1 Pet. ii, 16) ; but personal freedom is also a sacred right.

The individual retains his own rights as against the State. Among the surrounding nations in the time of the prophets, the only form of government known was that of the absolute State, in which the individual was engulfed without leaving a trace, like a drop of water in the ocean. So it was with the Pharaohs in Egypt and among the Assyrians in the East. The Private Law of Moses did not exempt the individual from solidarity with the State, nor did it conflict with the fundamental law, that the right of the State prevails over that of the individual. But the individual must not be deprived of his own

dignity, his own rights or his own property, in order that the rights of the State may be maintained. The individual must be subordinated to State government, but he must not be reduced to a nonentity or treated as a slave without rights of his own. The Bible tells the story of King Achab who, in order to round off his own estate, wanted to acquire the vineyard of a small farmer called Nabob. But Nabob objected to parting with the inheritance of his fathers. Jezabel, that fiend in human form, bore false witness against him, and after a short trial Nabob was stoned to death and his vineyard confiscated. This violation of man's natural rights was severely punished by God (3 Kings xxi, 1-19).

3. Outside the sphere of man's social rights properly so called, besides his right not to be deceived or defrauded, there is a wider sphere of rights and obligations which are not set down on the tables of the Mosaic Law, but are written in the heart of man. Our extract from the Mosaic code mentions two very significant examples : 'Thou shalt not speak evil of the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind ; but thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, because I am the Lord.' The deaf man may not hear your curse ; but God has heard it.

The blind man may not see the stone in his path ; but the Lord has seen your wickedness. Hence the added words : ‘ Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God.’ The lawgiver cannot possibly legislate for every case of ethical conduct. It is enough if from examples such as these men can learn to have that delicate consideration for one another, that mutual tact, which is essential for the life of men in society.

### III. THE RIGHTS OF LABOUR IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The third point in our extract from the Mosaic code deals with the rights of labour. ‘ The wages of him that hath been hired by thee shall not abide with thee until the morning.’ Like a beacon these words on the rights of labour send out their light from the mountain of biblical antiquity. In this case, too, the prophets confirm the law of the Pentateuch : ‘ Woe to him that will oppress his friend without cause and will not pay him his wages ’ (Jer. xxii, 13). In an age and at a stage of civilization in which labour was everywhere else branded with the mark of slavery, the Book of books recognizes the ethical value of labour. The same law which

set aside the Sabbath as a day of rest, also pronounced labour sacred and required that everyone, not only the slave, should as far as possible earn his livelihood by his own labour, receive the fruits of his own work (Ps. cxxvii, 2), and not live on the bread of the pauper and the alms of charity. Not for ever would men's daily bread fall like snow from Heaven as the manna fell in the desert. Not everywhere would the pot of meal be miraculously filled as it was for the widow of Sarepta.

It is one of the Bible's achievements in the history of civilization to have broken, at least fundamentally, with slavery and to have insisted that workers should receive their just wage. 'The wages of him that hath been hired by thee shall not abide with thee until the morning.' Elsewhere (Deut. xxiv, 14) the law required that the payment should not be delayed, and we find a similar precept in the book of Tobias (iv, 15) : 'If any man hath done any work for thee, immediately pay him his hire ; and let not the wages of thy hired stay with thee at all.' The Catechism speaks the language of the Bible when it numbers the sin of depriving the labourer of his hire among those that cry to Heaven for vengeance. To-day this law of the Bible, that daily wage-

earners should be paid their hire on the day itself, should be extended by us to those struggling trades and professions which often have so long to wait for the settlement of their accounts.

#### IV. THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. Our extract also deals with the administration of justice—and herein lies a further contribution of the Old Testament to the social order. ‘Thou shalt not do that which is unjust, nor judge unjustly. Respect not the person of the poor, nor honour the countenance of the mighty; but judge thy neighbour according to justice.’ In their diatribes the prophets had many a hard word for violations of the law of God, for moral corruption, especially in the great cities,<sup>1</sup> for voluptuousness and prodigality, for avarice and usury, for the exploitation of the poor. But they were loudest in their condemnation when impartiality was prostituted in the public administration of justice, when the poor were found guilty because of their poverty and the mighty acquitted because of their riches, when innocent blood was shed and when the judicial

acquittal was bought with bribes from the corrupt judge. For four classes especially is justice demanded ; for the poor, for the stranger, for the widow and for the orphan, who otherwise had none to protect them. And it was in fact to the poor and the needy that the prophets primarily extended their protection. Even kings and priests were not immune from their public condemnation : I will have none of your offerings, says the Lord, unless you seek justice, relieve the oppressed and protect the rights of orphans (Is. i, 10-17).

2. Not only in the public administration of the law but in private business and commercial dealings, too, the Mosaic law and its interpreters require that there should be justice and equity. 'A deceitful balance is an abomination before the Lord' (Prov. xi, 1 ; xvi, 11 ; xx, 23). 'Let the balance be just and the weights equal, the bushel just and the sextary equal' (Lev. xix, 36). 'Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmarks' in order to extend his own estate (Deut. xxvii, 17).

3. The penal code of the Bible contains many penalties which to our Christian and modern sensibilities appear very harsh. But now that the penal code of Hammurabi—a Babylonian king of the third millennium before

Christ and a contemporary of Abraham—written in cuneiform characters on a block of stone, has been unearthed from the sand of the desert, we are in a position to compare the code of the ancient Jews with a pagan code of the same period. The ancient Babylonian code contains penalties which are blood-curdling in their ferocity: False witness in a court of justice and theft are punished with death (7 and 8). Undutiful children have their tongues cut out, and other frightful mutilations are practised besides (192-195). The landlady who lets her tavern as a meeting-place to anarchists forfeits her life (108 *seq.*). The doctor who bungles an operation has his hand chopped off (218). In such penalties the tiger-claws of paganism can be seen. The penal code of the early Bible has not lost all traces of the primitive stage of civilization, but as compared with its Babylonian counterpart it stands on an essentially higher level. Apart from the one instance of a particularly serious crime, mutilations are forbidden. The one remaining death-penalty of stoning, which to us appears at first sight barbaric, was reserved only for the most heinous crimes, such as blasphemy, the desecration of the Sabbath, or adultery. Stoning is the only death-penalty



which is carried out with the co-operation of the whole community and not by a single executioner. From the biblical point of view such crimes as we have mentioned rested like a stain of blood upon the whole nation, and therefore the whole nation must take a part in washing it away. The penal code of the early Bible did not rise to the sublime heights of the Gospel, but it did not sink to the depths of paganism.

#### V. ECONOMICS IN THE EARLY BIBLE

In connection with the economics of the early Bible three laws may be considered. First, the law against the unjust accumulation of landed property. The great Isaias, the classic among the Prophets, utters a terrible curse against those wreckers who greedily exploit economic distress and buy up all the small holdings in their neighbourhood. Their sin is one that cries to Heaven : ' Woe to you that join house to house and lay field to field, even to the end of the place. Shall you alone dwell in the midst of the earth ? These things are in my ears, saith the Lord of hosts ' (Is. v, 8). This curse upon the usurious accumulation of land has an economic motive : such a process would lead in time to an

intolerable capitalism on the one hand, and to an intolerable impoverishment of the masses on the other. But there is a deeper reason still, a religious one : with their holding in the Promised Land, however small it might be, families lost also their guarantee of a portion in the kingdom of the Anointed in the fullness of time.

A second law protected farmers from being overloaded with debt. In every seventh year, the so-called year of pardon, all debts became null and void, all loans expired, and all those who in the meantime had been forced by their poverty to sell themselves as slaves became free men once more (Deut. xv, 1-12). In every fiftieth year, the so-called jubilee-year, all land which had been alienated or mortgaged through poverty or need became once more the property of its hereditary owners (Lev. xxv, 23-31). By this system families were saved from being overwhelmed with debt, and a more economic settlement was provided for. The idea underlying this measure was one of profound social importance, although often it did not work out in practice. Nehemias enforced the measure after the Captivity, compelling usurers to restore mortgaged land and house property to the hereditary owners

(2 Esd. v, 1-12). In our own Bavaria, farms were sold after the war which had remained in the same family for centuries. The sons had fallen in the war, the aged parents were unable to carry on alone, and thus the whole estate fell into the hands of some stranger—who, during the war, had not been impoverished. According to the Mosaic law it would have been impossible to deprive of their hereditary property families whose sons had given their lives for their country.

The third economic law is directed against usury. In the Pentateuch (Deut. xxiii, 20) it was forbidden to demand interest on a loan made to a needy compatriot. The prophets called such interest usury : ‘ To thy brother thou shalt lend what he wanteth, without usury.’ It is in the spirit of this law that the singer of the 14th Psalm, standing at the door of the temple, addresses those who enter : ‘ He that puts out his money to usury ’ shall not come before the eyes of the Lord. On loans made to foreign merchants interest might be demanded, because loans made to the Phœnician merchant were made for purposes of business, and not to relieve his distress. It is difficult to say how far the law forbidding usury among the Jews themselves was actually

observed. In any case, we have here again an idea of the profoundest social importance in biblical economics. Belonging to the same period and the same stage of civilization, Babylonian promissory notes and agreements written in cuneiform characters have been discovered, in which interest at the rate of 30 per cent is demanded. In the Bible the usurious dealer in corn is accursed (Prov. xi, 26) and the demanding of excessive interest is forbidden ; in Babel the usurer and the exploiter of the needy are allowed full sway.

#### VI. THE RELIGIOUS FOUNDATION OF THE SOCIAL ORDER

Values of the social order, such as the rights of the poor, the rights of the individual, the rights of labour, the administration of justice, political economy, are for the Sacred Scriptures also values of the religious order, 'laws of the Lord.' Thus in our extract we hear again and again the phrase 'I am the Lord,' and concerning economic prescriptions we hear the warning : 'Keep My laws.' You shall leave that which remains on the field for the poor, for the Lord has given you this fertile land and its harvest ! You shall admit the

poor to eat at table with you, for you are yourselves boarders at God's table ! (Is. lviii, 7-9). Everywhere we find the common belief in God as founding the social relation between rich and poor : ' The rich and the poor have met one another ; the Lord is the maker of them both ' (Prov. xxii, 2). You shall respect the rights of the worker, for God who made the worker made the employer too (Job. xxxi, 13) ! You must regard an oath, that firm support upon which rests the administration of all justice, as a serious matter, for it is taken in the name of God, and perjury is a profanation of His name (Lev. xix, 12) ! You must see that the stranger receives justice, for you were once the slaves of the Egyptians in a strange land (Deut. xxiv, 17) ! Thus again and again we find the laws of social order founded upon religious conceptions.

According to the sacred books apostasy from God is the ultimate source of social disorder ; and this in turn can be remedied only by conversion to Him. The social and the economic order are best regulated when they are founded on the firm rock of the ten commandments. Humanity, the brotherhood of mankind of which we hear so much nowadays, is only what its name implies when it is asso-

ciated with belief in God, and not divorced from religion, still less when it is invoked as a substitute for religion. The cradle of humanity is not in Greece, it is in Palestine. The rights of men will not be respected where there is no respect for the rights of God. Belief in man's word and human loyalty will best flourish where belief in God's word and loyalty to Him are paramount. The natural order is best secured against unnatural disorder where the supernatural order of revelation is recognized by faith. Social order and religious order, economic order and moral order are indissolubly connected with each other.

We do not want to re-establish the Mosaic mode of life, nor the Mosaic legislation. It is not our wish to reform the modern penal code and modern economic laws according to the Mosaic model. Even the Gospel 'fulfilled' the social laws and measures of pre-Christian Judaism, and translated them into more sublime formulas. Marriage, for example, of all institutions in the social life of a nation the most social, was restored by Christ to its primitive purity and dignity. To the Patriarchs of the Old Testament it was permitted 'by reason of the hardness of their hearts' to divorce the wife of their first choice and to take

another. But 'I say to you : Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth fornication.' (Matt. xix, 3-9 ; Mark x, 2-12). The conception of fidelity in the Gospel received a deeper meaning and a higher sanctity, and here, too, the law of progress in the kingdom of God is verified. Hence the disciples of the Gospel must not relapse into the marriage laws of Jewish times. To divorce a legitimately married wife is to relapse into the Mosaic marriage laws.

We do not want to re-establish the Mosaic mode of life, nor the Mosaic legislation. But we must acknowledge that the sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament have contributed material of great permanent value for the construction of the social order for all time. Social activity has assumed a different form in matters of detail, for example in legislation for the poor or in the administration of justice, but its fundamental ideas are these universal values for civilization which come to us as a priceless heritage from the sacred books of pre-Christian Judaism. This wealth of thought is so unique among the civilized nations of antiquity that we are bound to say : People of Israel, this 'did not grow in your garden of your own planting. This condemnation of

usurious land-grabbing, this war against the oppression of the farmer by debt, this prohibition of usury, is not the product of your spirit. Those who do not believe in inspiration, who do not regard these books as the word of God and as divine revelation, must confess that the people of Israel is a super-people in the history of the world. There is no other alternative. Either we believe in the inspiration of the sacred books, or else we must say to the Jewish people : ‘ You are the cleverest people in the world’s history.’ We believe in inspiration. We believe that the Spirit of God has spoken to men through the mouth of His chosen prophets. And in this belief we call upon the German people once again : ‘ Guard what you have !.’ Let no man rob you of your priceless inheritance of the sacred books, and do not allow biblical instruction to be banned in our German schools, and our children thus to suffer unjust and grievous loss ! Amen.



## THE CORNER-STONE BETWEEN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

‘God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all in these days hath spoken to us by His Son.’ (From the third Mass of Christmas. Heb. i, 1 *seq.*)

THE feast of Christmas and its Eve are pervaded by a spirit of holy joy. We think of the happy children standing under the Christmas tree with beaming eyes and fluttering hearts. We think of the unhappy victims of the economic distress, weeping silent tears at the memory of the care-free days of their youth. We think of those who are in prison, whose lives are embittered, but whose souls on this holy night are more easily than usual opened to a word of kindness.

The holy joy of Christmas may be spoiled by three classes of people. First there are the superficial ones, those who in the midst of

Christmas trees, Christmas presents, and the distractions of Christmas celebrations have forgotten the most important thing of all—the Holy Child whose feast it is. Christmas festivities without faith in the Infant Jesus are the shell without the kernel. Then there are those who deny Christ, who have reduced the mystery of Christmas to a myth and a fable, and who do not accept the Gospel story. The Gospel of the new-born Son of the Virgin is not a fable out of the *Arabian Nights*; it is a mysterious but historical fact attested by the historical sources of the gospels. Finally, there are those childish, pious souls—whether they wear the nun's veil or not—who speak and sing in sugary tones of the little Jesus and the little angels, and mingle Gospel and fable together. By all means let us speak to children in their own language, and even 'become as little children' ourselves; but 'strong meat is for the perfect' (Heb. v, 13 *seq.*), that is, for the fully grown. Christmas must be a feast for grown men, and not only for children, and it must not belie the manly character of the Christian religion.

'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End, saith the Lord God,' in the first and last

chapters of the Apocalypse (i, 8 ; xxi, 6 ; xxii, 13). The works of God are not left half-finished. If the Lord wrote the letter 'A' in His work of salvation, if He made a beginning by His revelation in the Old Testament, then He brings His work to completion, even to the letter 'Z'—or according to the Greek alphabet to the letter Omega—by the revelation of the New Covenant. 'God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all in these days hath spoken to us by His Son.' Christ is the 'end of the law' (Rom. x, 4), the Omega to which the promises of the Old Covenant are the preparation. Christ is also the Alpha, in which the Redemption of the New Covenant has its source and origin. Christ closes the doors of the Temple of the Old Testament and opens the gates of the new Kingdom of God. He dismisses the prophets and calls His Apostles. Christ is the personal fulfilment and the keystone of the Old Covenant, the founder and the corner-stone of the New Covenant, the personal bridge between Judaism and Christianity.

## I. CHRIST THE OMEGA OF THE OLD COVENANT

Christ is the fulfilment of the Old Covenant. In a messianic prophecy (Gen. xlix, 26) he is hailed from afar as 'the desire of the everlasting hills.' From the tents of the Patriarchs, those hills on the horizon of antiquity, from the scrolls of the prophets, from the messianic types, from the Psalms, from the whole liturgy of the early Bible comes a greeting and a foreshadowing of the Lord's Anointed. From the third to the sixth hour, from the sixth hour to the ninth the cry of longing becomes louder still. And at the eleventh hour a mood lay over the Promised Land rather like that of the whole of created nature, when it seems to hold its breath as the red of dawn appears over the eastern mountains with the rising of the sun. When the last of the prophets, John the Precursor, preached his Advent sermons on the banks of Jordan, all the people went forth to hear him, and the authorities asked him the official question: 'Art thou He that art to come, or look we for another' (Luke vii, 19 *seq.*)? And when the first Apostles were called, they ran one to another with the joyous news: 'We have found Him of whom

Moses in the law and the prophets did write ' (John i, 45). Striking proofs, these, of the intensity with which men longed for the expected Saviour. The prophet Isaias makes the Messiah say : ' The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me. He hath sent me to preach to the meek, to heal the contrite of heart, and to preach a release to the captives and deliverance to them that are shut up ; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord ' (Is. lxi, 1-3). In the fullness of time Jesus read out this passage in the synagogue of His own village ; then He handed back the scroll and said : ' This day is fulfilled this scripture in your ears ' (Luke iv, 16-21). With these words He publicly announced : I am the fulfilment, the Omega of the messianic prophecies.

During those centuries of expectation the question may often have been raised : Where does He tarry, and why does He keep us waiting so long ? Why was the Saviour born so late ? ' My Father worketh until now ' (John v, 17). In the execution of the divine plan of salvation there is no interruption ; but there is no precipitation either. There is no pause ; but there is no sudden haste. Man, whose span of life is short, wants to see the out-

come, and asks impatiently : ' Lord God, why art Thou so slow ? ' The Eternal, with whom a thousand years are as one day, fixes His eyes upon Bethlehem, and on the road to Bethlehem He paces out the milestones by centuries. He will only create man when the sun and the stars are shining and the whole of creation is made habitable and ready to receive man, who is to be its king. The God-man will be born only when after a long Advent the lights of the messianic prophecies are burning, and the whole world is ready to receive the Saviour, who is its King. Ask no more, why the Saviour was born so late ! He was not only to be the dew from Heaven and a gift from above, He was also to be ' the fruit of the earth ' (Is. iv, 2) and ' to bud forth ' from the earth (Is. xlv, 8). Therefore, he was not to fly swiftly as an arrow down to the earth, He was to bud forth slowly from the earth like a plant. Moreover, pagan humanity must first drink the cup of estrangement from God to its bitterest dregs. It must first, in the search for its soul's contentment, beg at every door on earth, and like the prodigal son learn by experience : for us men there can be no salvation in ourselves. The pagan world had wandered far astray from its Creator. Infinite mercy would bring

it back and lead it by slow and gentle guidance to the arms of God. God's way of teaching mankind needed time. That is why the Saviour of the world was born so late.

Christ is the redemption of the Old Covenant. Men are able even after their death to prolong their activity for a while in their children or their schools, in their books and their works. Perhaps even a monument to their memory may for a long time cast its shadow on some strip of earth. But never has a man been heralded for centuries before his birth, as the child of Bethlehem was heralded by the prophets. Some men have been honoured in history by the name of Great ; but not even a cock-crow has foretold their birth. The Child of Bethlehem, the greatest of the great, was greeted for centuries before His birth by the welcome of the messianic prophecies. This fact alone is a proof of the Divinity of Emmanuel; it is itself a piece of the Gospel, a unique privilege, an indication that Christ is the one Superman of history. He is superhuman because millenniums after His death the traces of His blessings cannot disappear. Superhuman because long before His birth as the 'angel of the covenant' He was guiding the chosen people, and Himself

decided in what people and of what mother He should be born.

Christ is the Saviour of the world in the widest sense of the word ; He is the Redeemer for every world, for pre-Christian as well as for post-Christian humanity. ' It hath well pleased the Father through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, making peace through the blood of His cross, both as to the things that are on earth and the things that are in heaven ' (Col. i, 19 *seq.*). Our vision would be short-sighted and incomplete if we thought only of the period after Christ. The Child in His cradle stretches out His arms to all, as He did later on the Cross, as if to say : ' For you all.' The process of historical redemption is truly a procession : in the middle is the Saviour Himself. Pre-Christian humanity marches before Him with the Advent hymn : ' To-morrow we shall see the glory of God.' The post-Christian world follows after Him with the Christmas hymn : ' We have seen His glory.' The history of the world is not merely a world-judgement, it is also, and much more, a world-redemption. The graces of the pre-Christian period also are due to the world-Redeemer. It may be asked : How can the fruit of a tree be plucked before the tree itself is planted ? I answer : If the



Mother of God fifty or sixty years before the death of Christ was preserved immune from original sin and filled with grace in view of the future redeeming death of her Son, then so also the men of the Old Covenant could likewise draw from the waters of redemption 500 or even 5000 years earlier, though they first welled up at the foot of the Cross. If the Precursor of Christ could be sanctified in the womb of his mother before the death of Christ, then the redeeming love of God could give to other men also an advance payment from the grace of the Cross. The whole bridal equipment of the people of Israel, her election, her promises, her law and the other sacred books, her liturgy and the marvels of her history, all this was a loan from the Cross of Christ—a loan, I say, using the term by way of a similitude.

It has also been asked : Why did God not allow the human race to become extinct after the sin of Adam ? If men were now to be born only to inherit the curse of original sin : labour among thistles and thorns, motherhood amidst the pangs of travail, the constant attacks of the lurking serpent ; would it not have been an easier lot, would it not even have been a just redemption for mankind, if it had

died out after original sin? To-day the Crib and the Cross give us the answer: No, it would not have been better. The children of Adam were to live on, not merely that they might inherit the curse of original sin and of Satan, but rather that they might receive the blessing of Redemption, the blessing of Satan's conqueror. How great is our Redeemer when we see Him in this light: as world-Redeemer, as the Alpha and Omega of history, the manna of the Old Covenant, the Host of the New.

## II. CHRIST THE ALPHA OF THE NEW COVENANT

Notwithstanding all the guidance of divine grace Israel did not know the time of her visitation. Emmanuel came to His own, yet His own would not receive Him. The sign, which was to stand as the ensign of the messianic King for the people (Is. xi, 10), became a sign which was contradicted (Luke ii, 34). In the course of His life it became clearer and clearer that only a 'tithing' would remain for the new kingdom (Is. vi, 13), the small band of Apostles and other disciples. The great majority of the people rejected the Messiah with the cry: 'His blood be upon us and upon our children' (Matt. xxvii, 25). Then

the Lord knew that He could not put new wine into old bottles. Weeping over the city of Jerusalem, and shaken to the depths of His soul, He took leave of the prophets of the Old Covenant, and in the chalice of His blood founded the New Covenant that was to endure for ever (Luke xxii, 20). Then He, the Omega of pre-Christian Judaism, became the Alpha of post-Jewish Christianity. Then He, the stone which the builders of the Old Covenant had rejected, became the corner-stone of the New (Ps. cxvii, 22). Both in the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians (ii, 20) and in the liturgical prayers for the consecration of a church Christ is called the corner-stone, which consolidates the structure of the wall.

In the Gospel of the Infancy of Christ the fundamental laws of the new kingdom of God are already revealed. Emmanuel was born as a little child in order to explain the mystery of man's natural growth to manhood ; to make manifest His blood-relationship with the children of the promise ; to reveal God's love for men in the trustful and winning countenance of a child ; and also in order to reveal for Christendom the law of little beginnings. ' God hath chosen the weak things ' (1 Cor. i, 27) ; and the greater the work that God has

in mind, the smaller and the more hidden will be its beginnings. With a small band of Apostles the Almighty won the kingdoms of the ancient world for the Cross. The stone out of the mountain cast headlong the colossal statue with the feet of iron (Dan. ii, 34). With a few drops of water the miracle of baptism is worked, and with a tiny host the miracle of the Eucharist. Mary and Joseph must indeed have had great faith to recognize in that little child their infinite God, the splendour of the Father, the King of glory.

Emmanuel was born as a child, to reveal the law of development in the new kingdom. As He grew from babyhood to childhood, from childhood to adolescence, from adolescence to manhood, no more quickly than the sons of men are wont to do; as He developed from childish utterance to human speech, from being carried in His mother's arms to walking on His own feet; so should His kingdom on earth grow, spreading by a gradual process from the little land of Chanaan over the whole earth, after the likeness of the mustard tree that spreads its branches wider and wider, after the likeness of a leaven that inwardly and gradually renews the souls of men. The treasures of revealed truth were to become known to man

by degrees, not all at once. Likewise in the Child of Bethlehem we see revealed the law of tranquil development: 'That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaias the prophet, saying: My servant . . . shall not contend nor cry out; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets' (Is. xlii, 1 *seq.*: Matt. xii, 17-19). Crying in the marketplace and obtrusive propaganda are not according to the Spirit of Christ. At times the tranquillity is so great that we think the mills of God are standing still.

Emmanuel was born as a *poor* little child, to reveal the law of unostentatious development. As the son of a Mother who had no roof to her head, He was born, so to speak, on the streets, and yet he did not clench his little fists and utter curses. Such a gospel is not revealed by flesh and blood. Flesh and blood would certainly have had him enter the world as a rich king with great parade and show, not as a poor child. This was an elementary law for Christendom, in contrast to pre-Christian Judaism which over-emphasized its hopes of earthly prosperity. Christianity was to set the highest store by the supernatural treasures of the kingdom of Christ.

Christ is the absolute Alpha of the New

Covenant. In the Gospel of His public life the fundamental truths of Christianity for all time are revealed. The truth of truths, that of the Divinity of Christ, shines out from every page of the Gospel ; from His words and from His miracles, from His ethical teaching and from the ethical greatness of His personality. He and the Father are one. He who sees Him sees the Father also. His disciples have seen His glory, ' the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father ' (John i, 14). He commands the tempest, and creation recognizes Him : Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. He casts out devils, and the underworld recognizes Him : Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. He heals the sick, he calls the dead to life, and death recognizes Him : Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Where belief in the divine nature of the Anointed is abandoned or attenuated, there can be no question of Christianity. Christ is not one of the ways, He is the Way, the only way that leads to the Father. He is not one truth among many doctrines, He is the Truth, the only truth that guards against error. He is not a life, He is the Life, the only Life that saves from everlasting death. ' Thou art all my life, without Thee there is only death.' In the

Gospel, the human in the humanity of Christ—His fatigue, His hunger, His tears, His recoil from suffering, His death—is so associated with the divine in His divine nature, that we can make no mistake. He was born a poor child, but the angels sang Him a cradle-song such as was never sung for any son of man. He died on the gibbet of the Cross, but the sun darkened his light in sign of mourning. And so in the history of His kingdom the human and the divine will appear side by side. Disbeliefs and ingratitude, betrayals and denials, persecution, open or insidious, will continue in His kingdom. But always the finger of God will be evident, so that by scandals we may not be led into error.

The fundamental truth of the mission of the Apostolic Church is also laid down in the Gospel. According to the showing of the gospels Christ instituted a Church, only one Church, and that Church He founded not upon private judgement, but on the rock of Peter (Matt. xvi, 18). To the Apostolic Church Christ committed His own authority: 'As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you' (John xx, 21). 'He that heareth you heareth Me' (Luke x, 16). He sent His Apostles to teach the nations (Mark xvi, 15) and He

entrusted Peter with the special mission of confirming his brethren in the faith (Luke xxii, 32). He gave His Apostles the power to forgive sins (John xx, 23) and to celebrate the sacred mysteries in memory of Him. Thus seekers after truth in all times are directed by Him to the Apostolic Church.

The Gospel contains materials of everlasting value for the fabric of Christian conduct and government. But the gospels must be accepted as a whole, as a seamless garment, like the cloak of Christ Himself. We must not take strips of it to suit our own liking, nor must we distort isolated texts against the sense of the Gospel as a whole. Christ not only commanded us to search the Scriptures (John v, 39), He also commanded us to hear the Church (Matt. xviii, 17). Therefore, besides the Bible He recognized another rule of faith in the Tradition of the teaching authority of the Church. He not only required a faith that should move mountains, He also demanded the good works of penance and mercy. And as good works He counted not only prayer and almsgiving, so long as they are free from pharisaical ostentation, but He also commanded His disciples to fast. He not only gave the command to honour father and mother,



but He also said : ' He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me ' (Mark vii, 10 ; Matt. x, 37). He spoke of praying in the silence of one's chamber, and yet He also called the house of His Father a house for public prayer. The left hand must not know what alms the right hand gives, and yet the disciples of the Gospel must let their light shine before men. At one time we are told that Christ came to bring peace and not the sword, that is, to establish peace and concord among His disciples. In another passage He says that He is come to bring division and not peace, that is, that the individual must be prepared for the sake of Christ to bear the opposition of his own family. Particular texts of the gospels must be understood in their connection with the Gospel as a whole.

Everything in the Old Covenant which possessed permanent value Christ used in the construction of the New and eternal Covenant, but He transformed it by incorporating it in the Omega temple of perfection. The Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that Christ is greater than the angels, greater than Moses, greater than the high priests and the victims of olden times. Christ retained the Decalogue as the fundamental law for Christian conduct and

government, but by the evangelical counsels He pointed the way to a higher perfection. Christ paid a tribute to the ethical value of the Old Law when He took the text of his great commandment, the love of God and the love of one's neighbour, from the Pentateuch (Deut. x, 12 ; xiii 3 ; Lev. xix, 11 ; Matt. xxii, 37), but He endowed the word ' God ' with a sublimer meaning, and by ' neighbour ' He understood not only a compatriot, but any man, according to the parable of the good Samaritan. Love of one's neighbour according to the Heart of Jesus expects no reward for benefits conferred. Love of one's neighbour according to the Heart of Jesus abhors error and the desecration of the sanctuary, but treats erring humanity with all kindness, and does not extinguish the smoking flax. Similarly, the Founder of the New Covenant adopted in His liturgy the immortally beautiful prayers of the sacred books of pre-Christian Judaism. And so in the services of the Church we still hear the Psalms and readings from the prophets ; even on the greatest feasts of the Church, as to-night in the Matins of Christmas, and before Easter during Holy Week. In His ' Our Father ' the Son of Man puts first the petitions ' hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be

done,' and only later the petitions for daily bread and for deliverance from evil. The men of the Old Testament, Hebrew-wise, would have read the Our Father backwards. On the Mount of the Transfiguration Moses and Elias appeared on each side of Christ, as if to deliver the law and the books of the prophets to the Apostles of the New Covenant, who were there present on Thabor.

'God . . . in these last times has spoken to us in His Son.' Then let us hold sacred what the Son has said to us, and read it over and over again in the Gospels. We shall find the time for it if we are in earnest, and if we devote to it some of the time that we waste on other things. The Gospel is more than any human book, and therefore no human book can worthily take its place. Let us give more edifying books as Christmas presents ! But the first place among all books must be reserved for the Book of books, especially for the gospels and the other writings of the New Testament. Christmas is the feast of the three gospels, each with its own blessing : ' May the reading of the Gospel be our salvation and protection.' ' Through the words of the Gospel may our sins be blotted out,' ' May Christ, the Son of God, teach us the words of His Gospel.'

A storm is brewing in this country to-day, a hurricane which would sweep the Sacred Scriptures out of Germany, because they are Jewish books. It is my conviction that its effect on the contrary will be to enkindle in men of all creeds a new and holy enthusiasm for the sacred books. Our separated brethren do not kneel with us at the Communion-rail. But to meditate with faith on the Holy Gospel is to enter into spiritual communion with our Lord and Saviour. In May, 1928, a great Congress was held in Turin for the spread of the Holy Scriptures, with the motto : ' To know, to live and to spread the Gospel.' The Holy Father on that occasion wrote to the Congress as follows : ' No book can speak to the soul with such light of truth, with such power of example and with such loving-kindness as the Holy Gospel.'

Divine Master, from whose Book shines the sun whose glow warms the hearts of men ! Thou, the Alpha and the Omega, Thou, the promise and the fulfilment, the corner-stone of the Old and of the New Covenant with the Father, Thou, the manna of the Old Testament and the Host of the New, come and open our eyes so that we may more clearly see Thy picture in the Holy Gospel ! Speak Thy

*Ephetha*, that we may more readily hear Thy words, the words of life ! Open our lips, that we may spread Thy good tidings ever far and wide ! Saviour of the world, give us the power to become children of God, and to-morrow to see Thy glory. Amen.

## CHRISTIANITY AND GERMANY

‘Jesus Christ, yesterday and to-day, and the same for ever’ (Heb. xiii, 8).

THE Christian system of reckoning time divides history into two periods, that which precedes the birth of Christ and that which follows it. Every time we write a letter or put the date on a sheet of paper, December 31st, 1933, or January 1st, 1934, we confess the name of Christ, from the year of whose birth the years of the Christian era are numbered. Jesus Christ, the corner-stone for all time, ‘the king of ages’ (1 Tim. i, 17), the godfather and protector of the New Year, the eternal calendar of history, Christ, yesterday and to-day, and the same to-morrow and for ever.

The Saviour of the world left behind Him an inexhaustible blessing for all ages and for all nations. His name is to be invoked upon

all nations, and among all nations His kingdom is to be spread, so that everywhere the curse may be turned to a blessing, and the face of the earth renewed. Therefore Christ gave to His Church the command to teach all nations from the treasury of revealed truth, to baptize all nations in the grace-stream of Redemption, to gather all nations together in a world-wide divine kingdom upon which the sun never sets. In this kingdom of Christ on earth there are no pet-children specially favoured, and no step-children neglected, for He is 'rich unto all that call upon Him' (Rom. x, 12). In this kingdom different nations need not abandon whatever is good in their national characteristics, and on the other hand the Church must not abandon her super-national character or identify herself with any particular nation. It was otherwise with the Asiatic gentiles of antiquity : with them religion and State were so identified that the rise or fall of a nation meant the rise or fall of the national divinity.

In the German nation a movement is afoot to establish a Nordic or Germanic religion, which is to take its place side by side with the two recognized Christian creeds. Last year in a Diet at Eisenach the demand was made that

this third creed should receive in the Third Reich the rights of a publicly recognized religious society. And in the scheme for the coming assessment of Church rates the official recognition of the new religion, and therefore its equality of status with the two Christian denominations, is already projected.

And so the sermon to-day is on the subject : Christianity and Germany. The Germans in question are the ancient Germans of the first eight centuries, not those of the Middle Ages. The conversion of the Germans to Christianity was not a perversion ; it was not a stunting of their normal development. The greatest perversion would be a relapse into the paganism of the ancient Germans. To-day's sermon will not be an attack on Germany, it will be a defence of Christianity. It is my conviction that a defence of Christianity is also a defence of Germany. I mean that the German people will be either Christian, or else they will cease to be. An apostasy from Christianity, a relapse into paganism, would be the beginning of the end of the German nation.



*First Question : What was the state of the ancient Germans before the coming of Christianity ?*

First let me make a preliminary remark. It is the world-wide reputation of German scholarship that it does not content itself with surmise, but draws its conclusions scientifically from historical sources. It is to be hoped that the good name of German research will be upheld in the sphere of antiquarianism, and therefore that all those who are writing about the conditions obtaining among the ancient Germans begin by making a serious study of their historical sources, and do not compose fairy-stories out of their own imagination and according to their own preconceived ideas. Moreover it would not be scientific, on the one hand to praise to the skies all the good qualities of the pre-Christian Teutons, and on the other to ascribe all subsequent deterioration to Christianity. Just as medical science is on its guard against charlatanism, so historical science and antiquarianism must beware of romancers and fable-mongers. Fortunately, with regard to the state of the ancient Germans, we possess a small but valuable historical source in the *Germania* of the Roman historian Tacitus, who wrote about the year

A.D. 98. Two years previously the Apostle St. John had been writing his Apocalypse on the isle of Patmos, while in the far West the Roman author was collecting material about the ancient Germans. We confine ourselves to this historical source.

It is a fact, that the ancient Germans on both banks of the Rhine, both north and south of the Danube, worshipped a number of gods : Mercury (*Germania*, c. 9) and Hercules, Donar and Wotan, Tuisco and Thor, Castor and Pollux (c. 43). In addition there were goddesses, Mother Earth and Freia. Some of these divinities had been adopted from the Pantheon of the Romans, and therefore were not of German origin. The German gods were fashioned after the likeness of men, they were idealized portraits of what a German hero or a German house-wife was conceived to be. According to Christian doctrine it is man that is made after the likeness of God, not God after the likeness of man.

It is a fact, that the ancient Germans offered human sacrifices to their gods. In a sacred wood men were sacrificed to Ziu the god of war (c. 39), and the slaves who had washed the chariot of an island-goddess were afterwards drowned in the North Sea (c. 40).

It is a fact, that the ancient Germans in their forests and marshes indulged in savage superstition such as was found 'among hardly any other people'; that they sought the answers from the gods by runic staffs, and tried to learn the issue of an undertaking from the flight of eagles or crows, or even from the neighing of horses (c. 10).

It is a fact, that the Germanic peoples were savagely warlike in their struggle with the Romans (c. 37), who by that time had already incorporated into their world-empire the tribes south of the Danube and west of the Rhine. Among themselves, the Germanic tribes were in almost continuous civil conflict. Only of one tribe, the Chauci, 'the noblest of all the Germans,' is Tacitus able to tell us that they maintained their position by justice rather than by war (c. 35). As among every primitive people, even those of the early Bible, the vendetta was regarded by the Germans as a moral duty. If a member of the tribe was murdered, then his kinsmen, or in case of necessity all the members of the tribe, were strictly bound to avenge the dead man by slaying his murderer. The obligation of the vendetta might pass by inheritance from father to son (c. 21). Some refused to shave their

beards or cut their hair until their enemy had been slain (c. 31).

It is a fact, that slavery was the custom among the ancient Germans. The lot of slaves was on the whole an easier one with them than with the Romans; but even among the Germans a slave might be put to death with impunity.

Another fact is the proverbial indolence of the ancient Germans. The men left all agricultural labour to be done by slaves and women (c. 14 *seq.*). In time of peace they spent their lives either in hunting or else in sleeping, eating, and drinking (c. 15). The Roman Tacitus speaks again and again with scorn of their 'sleeping even till day-time' and of the 'customary indolence' of the Germans.

Other facts are the mania of the ancient Germans for drinking (c. 22 *seq.*), their carousals, which often terminated in bloodshed (c. 21), and their passion for dice-playing, at which they would wager even their own personal freedom, and if they lost, would serve as slaves.

In three things the Germans were admirable, and here Tacitus is able to hold them up as examples to be imitated by his countrymen. They were exemplary in their loyalty, especially within the limits of the 'comradeship,' when

once they had given their word to the leader (c. 13 *seq.*). They were exemplary in their hospitality, a virtue practised among the Germans 'as among no other people' (c. 21). They were exemplary in their high ideal of marriage and in their conjugal fidelity. 'Marriage among the Germans,' writes Tacitus (c. 17), 'is regarded as strictly sacred, and in this matter the Germans deserve the highest praise. They are practically the only people among the barbarians who are content with monogamy.' Tacitus also pays a tribute to their conjugal fidelity (c. 19). Mixed marriages with non-Germans were condemned as a possible source of degeneracy (c. 4 ; 46) ; though this was changed when the Gauls crossed the Rhine (c. 28). Woman was treated as 'a sacred being,' and in some cases venerated with divine honours (c. 8). Admittedly there is a shadow cast over this alluring picture : Though it was forbidden to kill children once born, in practice crippled or very poor children might be exposed.

Of any civilization properly so-called among the Germans of the pre-Christian period there can be no question, according to Tacitus. The peoples on the banks of the Euphrates and the Nile, already some two or three thousand years

previously, possessed a highly developed civilization in agriculture and manufacture, in the writing of history and the administration of justice, and, as we learn from the Tell Amarna letters, in commerce and even postal service. The Babylonians used a kind of psalmody in their worship. In the little land of Chanaan there were schools for the young of both sexes. The Germans, on the contrary, had no architecture, because their gods were worshipped in groves and not in temples ; while men lived in wooden huts. It is a mortifying fact that the pictorial representations of the ancient Germans which we possess do not come from the hands of their compatriots, but from Roman sculptors, who on Trajan's column in Rome have depicted German prisoners of war in the Emperor's triumphal procession. For the vocal music of the ancient Germans, whether in religious worship (c. 2) or in battle, Tacitus makes the apology that their singing is a harmony of souls rather than a harmony of voices (c. 3).

*Second Question : How was Christianity introduced to the ancient Germans ?*

The first missionaries had the twofold task of the prophets (Jer. i, 10) : to uproot and plant,

to pull down and build up. They had to uproot the cockle of polytheism, human sacrifices, and superstition. The vendetta and slavery, sloth and drunkenness, although they did not immediately disappear with the oaks of Donar, had to be 'pulled down' by a gradual process of education and replaced by Christian virtues—a process which even to-day is not quite complete. They had to plant everything that was good seed: loyalty, a high ideal of marriage and conjugal fidelity, reverence for women. On Chapter 22 of the *Germania* a commentator has the following remark: 'Inordinate sleeping, a relic of early German sloth, first disappeared under the influence of Christianity and its early Mass.' The cremation of the dead also was abolished by the Christian missionaries as pagan immorality.

While the angels were singing their song of world-peace over the cradle of Bethlehem, the ancient Germans were still singing their war-songs in many a heavy conflict. A few years later the eagles of the Roman legions confronted the German peoples on the banks of the Zuyder Zee. The Word Incarnate was a boy of nine at Nazareth when the battle of Teutoburg forest was fought and Herrmann,

the Prince of the Cherusci, annihilated the legions of Varus. Emmanuel's prayer for the peace of the world was heard for the ancient Germans too, and His command to the Apostles was given also for their benefit : ' Go, the fields are ripe for the harvest.'

The Germans on the left bank of the Rhine received the first messengers of Christianity in the second century. The left bank of the Rhine was a province of the Roman Empire, and therefore Christian missionaries were able to come and plant the Cross there under the protection of the Roman legions, although in Rome itself the Christians were still being persecuted. The three military strongholds of the Rhine, Mainz, Treves, and Cologne, were also the strongholds of the Christian mission.

The incursion of the barbarians, breaking like a great wave over Europe, caused Christianity to spread more swiftly. The Suevi, like the West Goths, were at first Arians, but became Catholic in the sixth century. The first tribe to be converted directly to the Catholic Church without previously passing through Arianism, were the Franks. With the baptism of the Frankish King Clodwig in 496 came the crowning of this phase of the Christian mission. From the sixth century onwards Irish



and Scottish monks and other isolated missionaries gathered the German tribes round Cross and altar ; St. Columbanus, St. Gall and St. Rupert laboured in the region between Regensburg and Salzburg, St. Killian among the East Franks, St. Emmeran in Regensburg, St. Corbinian in Freising.

In the eighth century St. Boniface, the true Apostle of the Germans, consolidated the individual work of earlier missionaries—which had never been properly co-ordinated—by ecclesiastical organization, by the founding of seven episcopal sees and by the holding of synods. On his third visit to Rome St. Boniface, finally Archbishop of Mainz, received his official mission from the Vicar of Christ. In the year 724 he felled the oaks of Donar at Geismar and used their wood for the building of a Church of St. Peter. The fall of the oaks of Donar, like the sacrifice of Elias on Carmel, was the pronouncement of a divine judgement, to tell these primitive people on whose side the true God was. On June 5th, 754, St. Boniface died a martyr, the book of the gospels in his hand. Now that German soil was newly irrigated with a martyr's blood, God's plant could grow and flourish.

The Emperor Charlemagne combined the

political subjugation of the Saxons with their conversion to Christianity, and this was in part brought about by force, because he thought that without religious unity it would be impossible to achieve political cohesion among these tribes. To-day an unreasoning hate is being aroused against Charlemagne for having dealt the death-blow to paganism among the German people. It should not be forgotten, however, that before the time of Charlemagne 500 years of missionary work, without the use of political pressure, had been devoted to this purpose, and that the barbarian principle, that it is for the ruler of the country to decide the religion of his people, continued to be admitted for centuries after Charlemagne, even until the time of the Reformation. Compulsory baptisms are not according to the spirit of Christ or the spirit of the Church. But it is an extraordinary thing that the reproaches which are levelled at Charlemagne for the compulsory baptism of the Saxons are not made with the same indignation against the Emperor Julian the Apostate, who in the fourth century with a much more brutal abuse of political power, and in league with the Israelites, tried to destroy Christianity and to set paganism once more on the throne.

Through Christianity the Germans became a nation. Tacitus enumerates about fifty German tribes, who were engaged in constant civil war with one another. Most of them have disappeared from history ; even the valiant Cherusci, the conquerors of Teutoburg forest. It is an historical fact that this swarm of tribes was first welded together into stable unity as one nation in consequence of their conversion to Christianity. The relapse of this nation into Germanic paganism would with equal certainty result in national dissolution. The Roman Tacitus uttered a fearful curse upon our forefathers : ‘ May the Germanic tribes preserve their hatred for one another. There can be no greater benefit for us than division among our enemies ’ (c. 33). Christianity has changed this curse of the pagan into a blessing, and to-day we repeat it as a New Year’s blessing for our nation : ‘ May the German people preserve their love for one another ! There can be no greater benefit for us than the unity and concord of our people.’

Through Christianity the Germans became a civilized nation. The monks of St. Benedict taught our forefathers agriculture and the handicrafts, as well as the fine arts in the service of the liturgy. In pagan times, when the

Germans spent their time in idleness, intellectual life was practically non-existent, and now, after the conversion of the Germans to Christianity, we see new creative forces of culture arise. We see a springtime of intellectual activity, a golden age of early German literature, which finds its first expression in the heroic ballads of the eighth century, and reaches its most perfect development in the religious poems of the ninth century, especially in the *Heliand*. The *Heliand*, the first German version of the Gospel, a veritable pearl of literature, demands that loyalty which was the ideal of the ancient Germans as the due of the Christian Saviour, who appears as the leader of a mighty host summoning all men to join his company. The *Heliand* is the reconciliation, the marriage between Christianity and Germanism. The *Heliand*, the masterpiece of a Saxon poet, appearing one generation after the baptism of Widukind and his Saxons, is also an indication that the conversion of the Saxons was something more than a mere external acquiescence. In the same century there appeared in Alsace the *Krist*, the second German version of the Gospel. These historical facts cannot be gainsaid : it was through Christianity that the Germans

first became a nation, and a civilized nation in the proper sense of the word.

The most difficult task of the Christian missionaries was to induce the Germans to change their swords into ploughshares, to abolish the laws of the vendetta, and to bend the knee before the Cross of Christ. That the Son of Man should have allowed Himself to be led as a lamb to the slaughter, without turning at bay like a wild bear, was a scandal to these primitive folk. The missionaries were able thereupon to point out that in the Psalms of the Old Testament (Ps. xlv, 4-6) the Lord's Anointed had already appeared as the leader of a victorious army, and that in the Apocalypse also the spread of the kingdom of God is represented as a victorious combat with the dragon. In the end the missionaries had to explain to the Germans that there is a moral heroism even in loving one's enemy ; that a moral victory, in fact, calls for greater heroism than the vendetta ; that the Saviour, the *Heliand*—to use their own language—did not throw away his shield, that on the contrary by suffering His Passion and Death without resistance He overcame death and Satan, and by His Resurrection gained the greatest victory that the world has ever known. In this way

Christianity not only renewed the face of the German earth, it also created anew the hearts of the German people.

*Third Question: What is the Relation of Christianity to the German Race?*

From the Church's point of view there is no objection whatever to racial research and race culture. Nor is there any objection to the endeavour to keep the national characteristics of a people as far as possible pure and unadulterated, and to foster their national spirit by emphasis upon the common ties of blood which unite them. From the Church's point of view we must make only three conditions: First, love of one's own race must not lead to the hatred of other nations. Secondly, the individual must never consider himself freed from the obligation of nourishing his own soul by the persevering use of the means of grace which the Church provides. The young man who is always hearing about the blessedness of his own race is apt too easily to conceive that he is no longer bound by duties to God and His Church, duties of humility and chastity. Thirdly, race culture must not assume an attitude of hostility to Christianity. What are we

to say of the monstrous contention that Christianity has corrupted the German race, that Christianity—especially because it is burdened with Old Testament ideas—is not adapted to the genius of the nation, and that therefore it is an obstacle in the way of the national consciousness?

What is the relation of Christianity to the German race? Race and Christianity are not mutually opposed, but they do belong to different orders. Race is of the natural order; Christianity is a revealed religion and therefore of the supernatural order. Race means union with the nation; Christianity means primarily union with God. Race is nationally inclusive and exclusive; Christianity is a world-wide message of salvation for all nations. The concepts of revelation and redemption, of supernature and grace must not be watered down. The fourth gospel makes a net distinction between those who are born of blood and those who are born of God (John i, 13). Christ also clearly distinguished between what flesh and blood had revealed and what was revealed by the Father in Heaven (Matt. xvi, 17 foll.). We are Christians not because we are born of Christian parents; we are Christians because after our birth we were

reborn and made a new creature by baptism in Christ (2 Cor. xv, 17).

No nation ever insisted more on race and ties of blood than the Israelites of the Old Testament. But in the fullness of time the dogma of race was eclipsed by the dogma of faith. Around the cradle of Bethlehem there were Jews and pagans, shepherds from the land of Juda and wise men from the East. In the kingdom of this Child, according to the words of His Apostle, 'there is no distinction of the Jew and the Greek, for the same is Lord over all' (Rom. x, 12).

What is the relation of Christianity to the German race? The Christian, so long as he observes the above conditions, is not forbidden to stand up for his race and for its rights. It is possible, therefore, without divided allegiance, to be an upright German and at the same time an upright Christian. Hence there is no need to turn our backs upon Christianity and to set up a Nordic or Germanic religion, in order to profess our nationality. But we must never forget: we are not redeemed with German blood. We are redeemed with the Precious Blood of our crucified Lord (1 Pet. i, 9). There is no other name and no other blood under Heaven, in which we



can be saved, but the name and the blood of Christ.

*Fourth Question: What is the Relation of Christianity to German folk-lore?*

It is the fashion nowadays to study folk-lore—with which we in Bavaria are richly endowed—and to make comparisons, and wherever possible to trace all traditional usages, whether popular or ecclesiastical, to Germanic origin. The study of folk-lore may render valuable services in the cause of patriotism and national history. But we must beware of inventing impossible associations, against all critical and scientific rules, and of calling sacred what is really an abuse and a disorder. We must keep the winnowing-fan in our hands, to separate the wheat from the chaff. For the rest, here, too, we must avoid building fancy-castles in the air, devoid of historical foundation. For example, you cannot say in the same breath that the Christmas-tree was first mentioned in the seventeenth century, but that it goes back to the winter customs of the ancient Germans.

It is true that Tacitus mentions the ‘gleaming white horse’ which was maintained in a

grove at the public expense, but we must not on that account derive all the white horses of St. Martin from that of the ancient Germans. It is true that according to Tacitus the ' things ' or councils of the ancient Germans were held either at the full moon or at the new moon, but it does not follow that all moonlight usages derive from that old custom. They might more legitimately be attributed to the Israelitic customs of the Old Testament, where we find the new moon celebrated as a festival. Likewise, the custom of signing the first sheaf of the harvest with a cross might be derived from an early biblical custom ; because in the Old Testament the first sheaf of the harvest, as well as all first-fruits, was consecrated to the Lord. We have adopted into the German vocabulary many expressions from the Sacred Scriptures, even Hebrew expressions. We speak of *Tohuwabohu* (Gen. i, 2), of *Shibboleth* (Jud. xii, 6), and among the Franks, of *Krethi Plethi* (2 Kings xv, 18). The science of folk-lore should therefore inquire whether many of our usages may not be derived from the same source.

In this matter there is no dogma at stake. But it would be an error indiscriminately to associate all popular customs with ancient

Germanic usages and superstitions : singing 'to the star'<sup>1</sup> on the feast of the Epiphany, the blessing of palms on Palm-Sunday, the blessing of houses, and the blessing of new fruits, storm-candles, and the rest. Many of these have their origin in the liturgy of the Church, for example, the blessing of palms and of new fruits, and other blessings of the Church, which are neither superstitions nor relics of pagan customs. The Easter egg is a symbol of new life on the day of the Resurrection of Christ ; All Souls' bread was originally a distribution of bread to the poor, which, together with prayer for the dead, was, and still is, customary on All Souls' Day. Even in the calendar issued by the National Association for German Catholics abroad the distinction is not clearly made between pagan superstition and Catholic usage. Devotion to our Lady is not the worship of the goddess Freia baptized. The Archangel Michael is not a successor appointed to Wotan for the benefit of the German converted to Christianity.

Educationally it is a most valuable thing that the youth of Germany should be instructed

<sup>1</sup> " Sternsingen."

about the origins of their nation. But they should learn not only about the origins of their earliest ancestors, but also about the golden age of intellectual life in early Christian times, about the period of the *Heliand* and other religious poetry, so that the youth of Germany may know their people on the religious side and not only on the pagan side. The best form of ancestor-worship is to renounce all that is evil in one's forefathers, in our case the revengefulness, the indolence and the drunkenness of the ancient Germans, and on the other hand to accept as a sacred inheritance all that is good in them, in our case their loyalty, their pure conception of marriage and their reverence for women. In this sense the youth of Germany may learn a lesson from Tacitus : ' Marriage in Germany is held strictly sacred. In Germany people do not laugh at crimes. It is not the fashion there to be seduced and to let oneself be seduced. In Germany good morals are held of more account than good laws elsewhere ' (c. 17 and 19). Bible history should not be ousted from German schools by the study of German antiquities ; because the youth of Germany must learn to know not only their Germanic ancestors, but also their Christian forefathers, their ancestors, so to

speak, on the father's and on the mother's side. The Fatherland will be better served by upright disciples of the Gospel than by warlike ancient Germans.

Powers inimical to Christianity will endeavour also during this New Year to resurrect the paganism of ancient Germany from its grave. The proposal has already been publicly put forward to call the three days of the week Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday after the names of pagan Germanic gods : Wotan's day, Donar's day, and Freia's day. The ' Calendar of German Labour ' has placed before parents a selection of ancient Germanic names, to take the place of the biblical and Christian names, such as John, Henry, Mary, which had hitherto appeared in the calendars. But the majority of the German people will not so quickly renounce and betray their Saviour. We are not ashamed of our Christian names, those names which are inscribed on the tombstones of our fathers and which remind us of our heavenly models and intercessors with God. The grace of God did not save us from the paganism of Russia in order to let us fall now into a Germanic paganism. The gods of paganism are dead ; but the Saviour says : ' He that believeth in Me shall live ' (John

xi, 25). Emmanuel Geibel in one of his ballads makes a German mount guard at the foot of the Cross of Christ. The Gospel does not say that it was so ; but it is not intrinsically impossible, because there were many Germans in the Roman legions. However that may be, we will mount guard under the Cross of Christ. We will not let His name be dishonoured. We will let not the oaks of Donar be planted in place of the Cross. We promise to the Saviour of our nation the ancient German loyalty and adherence.

In the New Year our fellow-countryman, Brother Conrad von Altötting, will be canonized. Never in the history of the Church have so many German men and women been beatified or canonized during one Pontificate as during the Pontificate of our Holy Father Pope Pius XI : Blessed Irmengard, St. Peter Canisius, who preached from the pulpit of this Church, St. Albert the Great—these two both of them Doctors of the Church—Blessed Stilla, and now Brother Conrad of Altötting. May these German saints present our petitions before the throne of God, that our dear German people may preserve the Christian faith and the Christian morality. To the King of these saints, the patron of the New Year, to the

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Christ of yesterday and to-day and for ever,  
let every knee bow and every tongue give  
praise : Praised be Jesus Christ—for ever.  
Amen.

THE END







